



Therfield Village Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY216156
Inspection date	11 December 2006
Inspector	Kerry Freshwater
Setting Address	Therfield Village Hall, Church Lane, Therfield, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 9QB
Telephone number	07789 012419
E-mail	
Registered person	Therfield Village 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Therfield Village Pre-school opened in 2001 and operates from the large village hall. It is situated in the village of Therfield on the outskirts of Royston, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 09.30 to 12.00 for 39 weeks of the year. There is an optional lunch club from 12.00 until 13.00 for those who wish to stay. Children attend for a variety of sessions. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 23 children aged from two years, nine months to under five years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the village and surrounding areas. The nursery welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 5 members of staff. All of the staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three members of staff are working towards a further qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Effective procedures and practices are in place to promote children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Staff obtain all necessary information and consents from parents relating to children's health and diet to ensure appropriate care can be given. Staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications. Children are excluded if they are unwell or suffering from a contagious illness so that others are protected from infection.

Children are learning the importance of health and hygiene as they follow daily routines, which include washing their hands before food and after using the toilet. They understand that they need to wash their hands to wash away the germs. Children freely access tissues to wipe their noses and dispose of them appropriately. They independently wash and dry their hands after messy play activities and use liquid soap and paper towels to prevent the spread of infection. Consequently, children are becoming aware of good hygiene and keep healthy.

Children enjoy daily activities, both inside and outside, which enables them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. They learn to balance on narrow beams and stilts, climb on the climbing frame, run and jump in the outside play area. They ride on wheeled toys and enjoy music and movement sessions. Indoors, children handle tools and construction equipment with increasing control. They manipulate play dough and cut with scissors confidently.

Children enjoy snacks of raw vegetables and a selection of fresh fruit. They have access to drinking water at all times. They talk with staff about which foods are good for them. Any children with allergies have their needs met as staff take care to obtain information from parents. Children are well nourished and have an increasing understanding of healthy living.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children use the safe and stimulating learning environment well. They are able to move freely and independently because care has been taken to minimise hazards and prevent accidents. Daily safety checks and two-monthly risk assessments are carried out to all areas. This means that children can play, learn and explore without danger and ensures any problems can be identified and rectified quickly. Children benefit from a good range of safety measures. For example, sockets are covered, a secure entry system and fire fighting equipment is in place. Fire drills are practised regularly to help children become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency. Evacuation records are detailed which enables staff to effectively reflect on their practice to ensure the continued safety of the children. The atmosphere within the setting is welcoming and inclusive.

Children benefit from a wide range of good quality toys and resources that are stimulating and suitable for their stage of development. Resources are well organised and attractively set out for children to access. For example, staff create a dark area using the climbing frame and sheeting. Children are very keen to explore the light box, mirrors and lights in this area. Children are extremely enthusiastic in their activities and enjoy the excellent range of equipment available.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect because staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues. All staff members have attended child protection training and show a sound knowledge of child abuse. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and all related information is in place and easily accessible should a concern arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children take part in high quality activities throughout the session. They are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other. They choose independently and are gaining in confidence, asking questions and chatting with staff and visitors. They play happily together, learning to take turns and respond to others as they use the extensive range of equipment provided. Children enjoy their time in the pre-school. They achieve well because staff are highly skilled and use their exceptional understanding of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, to provide high quality care and education.

All children arrive happy and are eager to participate. Those who are new to the group are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive towards their individual needs. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. High quality adult-child interactions are extremely supportive of early communication skills. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a diverse range of exploratory and sensory experiences. For example, as they dig soil in the outside area, clear weeds, plant out flowers and enjoy sand and water play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are captivated and inspired by an extensive range of stimulating, relevant activities which are linked with the early learning goals, their individual needs and abilities. Children are able to access an extensive range of quality resources which support their learning across all areas. All children are eager to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They listen intently to stories which are read in such a way as to captivate their interest and imaginations. Children recount favourite books and rhymes. For example they hold up pictures of different characters of 'hey-diddle-diddle' and act out the parts of the 'Rama and Sita' story as they learn about Diwali. They follow the story of the 'hungry caterpillar', make a wall display and prepare fruit salad to demonstrate some of the foods he ate. Children are completely engaged in the stories that are read. All children use marks readily to represent their ideas and more able children are adept at writing their own names.

Children learn to identify numerals as they repeatedly check the numbers of children allowed on specific activities against the list displayed and successfully use numbers as labels as they play in the fruit shop. They accurately count together as they investigate how many children can fit under the climbing frame and eagerly subtract as they sing songs such as 'ten fat sausages' and 'five little leaves'. They gain confidence in using numbers in their play and respond enthusiastically to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. They systematically sort and sequence shapes and measure different amounts using varied size language in water play. Children learn about the natural world as they look for mini beasts outside, collect leaves and twigs on a spring walk, follow the life cycle of frogs and tadpoles and explore different textures. They enjoy visits from different animals and learn about their care. For example, a lamb from the local farm and a tortoise to illustrate Autumn and hibernation.

Children work and play well together. They are extremely imaginative and make sense of the world around them through role play as they talk on the telephone, use the mobile phones and fill their brief cases with the items that they need for their day at work. Staff provide endless opportunities to develop their pretend play experiences through the constantly changing role play area. For example, an emergency area, fruit shop, Santa's sleigh and a pets and vets area. Children express themselves creatively through a range of different mediums. They paint, draw, print and make collages that represent their experiences. They make chalk pictures and use newspapers for cutting as part of a black and white theme.

Children's physical skills develop considerably through a wide variety of experiences, including use of climbing apparatus, balancing equipment, wheeled toys and the parachute. They successfully negotiate obstacles as they run around and pedal bikes. They are extremely confident in their abilities and enthusiastically attempt new manoeuvres and experiences with encouraging support and guidance from staff. They make considerable progress with their fine physical skills as they paint, draw, purposefully build with various construction and cut with scissors showing increasing confidence.

Staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help them achieve as much as they can. A flexible approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Staff use individual play plans for each child, they record their achievements and identify targets to ensure all children are fully extended and stimulated according to their needs and abilities. Staff are perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking and their language skills. They use highly effective systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and to plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are all welcomed into the setting and are highly valued as individuals. They enjoy a broad range of opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, visitors to the nursery and discussion. For example, they learn about police work and get to see a real police car, they hear from the local vicar about giving thanks,

they meet and learn about visiting farm animals. Children find out about different cultural events, they make dragon boats for the Dragon Boat festival, taste noodles and use chopsticks. They are provided with a range of interesting activities that challenge their abilities and help them to make progress. They are engaged in activities that are carefully planned and well thought out so they can be adapted to the individual. Staff have a sound knowledge of learning difficulties and disabilities, they know where to get support to ensure children receive an appropriate range of activities to support their developmental progress. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Their behaviour is very good. Staff use appropriate methods to manage children's behaviour in a positive way as they provide praise, encouragement and stickers to help them learn what is right and wrong. Children are encouraged to take turns as they individually talk about the items that they have brought from home at 'sharing time'. They listen to each other and ask questions about home experiences and the items that are being shown. Children show concern for each other and share resources with their friends.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. This contributes significantly to children's well-being in the pre-school. Staff actively seek parents' views about their children's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis throughout their time there through informal discussion and use of a 'comments and suggestions' box. The dedicated staff team work hard to ensure that all parents know how their children are progressing and developing as they discuss their achievements daily and at organised 1:1 meetings with their key workers. Parent's input is highly valued and children benefit greatly from their involvement in activities both within the setting and as they extend their nursery learning at home using the individually identified targets for each child. The exceptional systems for joint working and shared information contributes to the continued development and learning of all children attending.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the good quality of organisation and the outstanding leadership and management of nursery education throughout the setting. Practitioners are well deployed in the nursery allowing children to receive appropriate adult attention. The generous staffing levels ensures that children build effective relationships and develop a positive approach to the learning experiences provided. Children enjoy whole group times, such as snack, story time and physical play activities and smaller groups for focussed activities. The premises are well organised. Indoor and outdoor space maximises play opportunities for children. Staff induction, training and a sound set of policies and procedures ensure that children keep healthy and safe and have a wide variety of play and learning experiences. Since the last inspection the group have made changes to their operating days however, Ofsted were not kept informed or updated. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The manager is highly experienced and committed to providing a strong, clear leadership while promoting high standards of education. The manager's warm, friendly and flexible approach is reflected by the whole staff team. All staff are actively encouraged to undertake ongoing training and are supported and monitored

effectively with thorough systems in place. They are committed to the ongoing improvement of the provision, the learning and progression of the children attending and their own personal development. Staff regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of their care and education and have been awarded the Herts Quality Standards accreditation (HQS). Staff are enthusiastic, professional and work collaboratively together alongside the local school to ensure continued support and encouragement for children in their learning and as they move on to the next stage of their education. The comprehensive induction and appraisal system ensures that the pre-school's policies and procedures are consistently applied.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group agreed to develop their record of attendance for children and staff and to make the hazardous items in the garden inaccessible to children before use of the area.

The attendance hours of staff and children are recorded appropriately and the hazardous items in the garden have been removed. Staff clear the outside area before use by minded children. This ensures that the attendance of staff and children can be monitored more accurately and that children are able to play safely in all areas of the provision.

Nursery Education

The group agreed to extend the opportunities to enable children to create spontaneously using their own imaginations and at their own pace.

Children are now able to access a range of craft materials and mark making equipment independently and use the resources freely throughout the session. Children direct their own play in the role play area.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the registration 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 outstanding.

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):

- ensure that Ofsted are notified of any significant changes to the operational plan, this refers to the opening hours.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

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

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk