



Swallownest Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303272
Inspection date	17 October 2006
Inspector	Angela Howard
Setting Address	Horsa Huts, Rotherham Road, Swallownest, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S26 4UR
Telephone number	01142 876823
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Registered person	Swallownest 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Swallownest Pre-School opened in 1970. It operates from a building called the Horsa Huts. The building is located on the main road, in Swallownest, in the borough of Rotherham. The group serves the local community and surrounding areas.

The setting is currently registered to care for 24 children aged two to five years, of which nine three year olds are in receipt of nursery education funding. There are currently 46 children on roll. The group offers sessional day care. Children attend for a variety of sessions. They open five days a week during school term time only from 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.45 to 15.15.

Seven regular members of staff, plus one regular volunteer work directly with the children. All have early years experience and relevant childcare qualifications. The setting is supported by the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are appropriately protected from illness and infection. They follow appropriate hygiene procedures and are cared for in clean and well maintained premises. Children learn simple hygiene practice, such as the washing of hands after using the toilet and before eating. Staff use effective cleaning methods, for example, they use anti-bacterial spray on food preparation and eating areas which limits cross infection and helps to maintain children's good health.

Children enjoy an acceptable range of physical activities to promote their good health and well-being. A free-flow system to enable children to access outdoors when they choose is very successful and promotes a positive attitude towards exercise. Children are developing increasing control of their bodies as they run, jump, pedal, kick and catch balls and quoits. However, the range of physical activities for more able children is not sufficiently challenging.

Nourishing snacks are provided for children. They have a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables each day. For example, children enjoy plums, raisins, apples, pears and dips served with celery and carrot sticks. Children are encouraged to try new food as they try Mexican and Chinese food as part of a topic or theme. This results in children learning about the importance of healthy eating and a balanced diet. However, children do not have access to fresh drinking water, therefore, they are not learning the importance of taking regular drinks to maintain their health. Snack time is a social occasion where children sit and chat to staff and their peers. Children chat about what they like and dislike and appropriate adult support ensures children's individual dietary needs are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure, safe and welcoming environment. Risk of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are vigilant and understand their role in keeping children safe. This means children are able to move around freely and safely. Children are actively encouraged to be aware of their own safety. For example, staff use clear explanations and discussion to teach them about keeping themselves safe, such as not to throw sand on the floor as someone may slip on it. Security of the premises is good ensuring children are safe at all times.

Equipment and toys are of good quality and suitable design. Resources are well-presented at low-level to encourage independent play and choice. All equipment is carefully monitored to ensure it remains safe and appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Children are appropriately protected as staff have a sound understanding of their role and responsibilities with regards to child protection matters. Staff are confident to report any concerns in order to safeguard children. However, the child protection policy does not inform staff or parents of the action required should an allegation be made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment where they have easy access to a wide range of toys and activities. Children thoroughly enjoy painting, collage and craft activities and have opportunities to explore materials, such as play dough, sand and water. This allows them to experiment with different media and freely explore their own ideas. Free play is carefully balanced with focused activities, for example, children make coloured flower sticks and coloured windows and learn to mix their own paint at the easel. This encourages children to make independent choices and decisions.

Children are happy and settled in the setting, because staff are friendly, kind and caring. Children who become distressed receive good levels of support from staff to ease the transition from home to the setting. Children are confident in their play and enjoy playing with real items in the estate agents and opticians. For example, children imitate and play imaginatively as they explain to me 'I am working in an office like my mummy'. Children love stories and enjoy singing songs at circle time. However, the range of planned activities is linked to the stepping stones. Therefore, the range of activities and experiences for children under three years of age is not always linked to the appropriate stage of development or based on children's individual needs. This results in children losing interest or becoming disruptive, particularly at circle time and story time.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. This is due to staff having a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff use their time, the space and resources effectively to support children's learning. The stepping stones guidance is used appropriately to plan and provide a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences. Planning of activities focuses on providing appropriate challenge and promotes progression in all the six areas of learning. Staff use a reasonable range of teaching methods, including adult-directed and child-initiated activities. This results in children being interested and enables them to enjoy their learning.

Children are confident and sufficiently self assured to work independently or in groups. They are eager to participate on arrival and seek out special friends or familiar staff to share experiences with. Children are developing good relationships and behaviour is good. They are generally engaged in play and select and carry out activities independently. For example, they freely access craft materials and design and create their own pieces of art work from a wide range of collage materials.

Children have appropriate levels of curiosity as they look for bugs using a magnifying glass and create their own colours using water and powder paint at the easel. They are becoming good communicators as they use language to make their own needs known. For example, at snack time they make it known they do not like celery or a particular dip that is offered. Children enjoy an environment which is rich in print. They recognise their name for snack and registration purposes and attempt mark making when recording how many bugs they have seen, or take down a message when answering the telephone in the role play area. However, opportunities

to ascribe meanings to marks, such as putting their names on pictures and linking sounds to letters are not fully exploited.

Children show interest in simple information and communication technology. They confidently use cash registers, telephones, calculators and are adept in using the mouse to complete basic computer programs. Counting skills are appropriately fostered by staff that make appropriate use of daily routines to introduce mathematics. For example, all children count to three before singing songs at circle time. They use comparative size and positional language independently in their play, such as 'the car is inside the garage'. However, staff do not fully explore opportunities for children to solve number problems. Children enjoy singing time and join in enthusiastically moving their hands to represent steering the 'big red tractor'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued as individuals and receive appropriate praise and encouragement. They are happy and content and are showing a strong sense of belonging. Children are familiar with daily routines and have formed good relationships with staff and their peers. They are developing positive attitudes towards others through stimulating activities and an environment that positively reflects diversity. Customs, cultures and festivals from around the world are introduced successfully to enable children to begin to understand the lives of others. For example, they try different foods like Chinese and Mexican and celebrate festivals, such as Divali. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave well and show care and concern for each other. This is because staff make children feel good about themselves and offer plenty of praise and encouragement. The methods used by staff for dealing with behaviour are sensitive, appropriate and take into account children's level of understanding.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents inform me they are happy to leave their children in the care of the staff. Parents value the approachability of the staff and the warm welcome they receive. A wide range of documentation is shared with parents to keep them informed of the care of their child. Children are clearly benefiting from the positive partnership and are settled in response to this. Parents receive appropriate information in a variety of ways, for example, through policies and procedures, children's assessment records and notices around the building. Most parents are aware that children's development records are accessible at all times but feel the verbal feed back is sufficient for their needs. Notices in the entrance inform parents of the current topic, letter and colour of the week so that they can contribute and extend children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The premises are sufficiently well organised to meet the needs of all children attending. Space is used appropriately and children are able to relax, play and move around independently.

Children's feelings of security and well-being are increased by the effective deployment of staff.

A wide range of well written policies and procedures which contribute to children's health and safety, are in place and are regularly reviewed. Policy documents are shared with parents to keep them well informed about the childcare and education. Staff are appropriately vetted and have suitable skills and experience to work with children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the education provision are satisfactory. The management of the playgroup is effective and operates appropriately offering children that attend satisfactory care and education. The manager plays an active role in day to day operations. She works alongside staff offering guidance and support for the whole staff team. Staff appraisals are completed annually and any training needs identified are addressed to ensure staff have the appropriate skills to deliver the curriculum.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection three recommendations and one action was imposed. The recommendations related to nursery education documentation and the hygiene of the kitchen facilities. The action related to the recording of children's arrival and departure times at the setting.

The staff have reviewed all documentation in relation to planning and assessment for nursery education children. The development of assessments is in its initial stages but appears to have addressed the recommendation raised. Therefore, children are receiving greater challenge and their individual needs are being met. The kitchen has been refurbished, therefore, children's health is being promoted appropriately. The action relating to the recording of children's times of arrival and departure has been completed. This results in children remaining safe.

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.

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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):

- extend the range of planned physical activities and experiences for children, appropriate for their stages of development and based on their individual needs
- ensure children have access to fresh drinking water
- ensure clear procedures are in place should an allegation of child abuse be made against a member of staff
- ensure activities for children under three years are stimulating and achievable.

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):

- develop opportunities for children to ascribe meanings to marks, such as putting their names on pictures
- develop opportunities for children to link sounds to letters
- improve practical activities for children to solve simple mathematical problems.

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