



Kirk Merrington Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	314118
Inspection date	06 March 2007
Inspector	Karen Marie Tervit
Setting Address	Blue House Estate,, Kirk Merrington, Spennymoor, County Durham, DL16 7JD
Telephone number	01388 811842
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Registered person	Kirk Merrington 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?

Kirk Merrington Pre-School was established over 20 years ago. The facility is operated by a committee of parents and staff. The pre-school offers sessional day care and is registered to care for 20 children aged two to under five years. It operates from two inter-connected rooms within a single-storey building which is situated near the centre of the village. There is access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves children from the local and surrounding areas.

There are currently 19 children on roll. This includes nine funded children. The pre-school is open five days a week, term time only. Sessions are from 09.00 to 12.00. Three staff work with the children. All staff have relevant childcare qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Exceptionally high standards of cleanliness are maintained in the pre-school. A cleaner is employed and staff also clean throughout the session as needed. Eating and food preparation surfaces are cleaned with antibacterial substances and toilets are continually checked to prevent cross-infection and the spread of germs. Staff set a excellent example to children by washing their hands with antibacterial gel and children know not to eat food which has fallen on the floor as it has germs on it and will make them poorly. Children are developing an awareness of good hygiene practices. They know when it is appropriate to wash their hands and do this independently. They learn interesting rhymes about keeping themselves healthy, such as ones about using tissues to wipe their noses after sneezing, so they do not spread germs. Children are extremely well protected in the event of an accident as all staff have completed first aid training to promote children's welfare. Several fully stocked first aid kits are available if needed. Medication and accident records are detailed to keep children safe.

Children are offered and enjoy healthy snacks of extremely varied fresh fruit, such as blueberries, oranges, mangoes, grapes and pears. They are able to choose from water and milk, so they are not thirsty. They have independent access to fresh drinking water from the cooler throughout the session. Children can bring a packed lunch and stay for this meal if parents wish them to, this is an exceptionally well planned and social occasion with staff sitting with the children and enjoying their own healthy packed lunch. Children engage in exciting activities, such as food tasting, to help them develop an understanding of what foods are good for them and what they taste like. They have excellent opportunities to see how fruit and vegetables are grown, either at the local allotments or in the pre-school's own vegetable plot.

Children enjoy excellent opportunities to play outside in the fresh air, in their enclosed play area. They delight in the challenges of a versatile range of activities outside, such as negotiating the path on their bikes and scooters, putting out fires or digging in the flower and vegetable patch, all of which they tackle enthusiastically. Activities, such as music and movement, where they practise tap and ballet skills in their own 'dance studio' allow them to exercise whilst having tremendous fun and developing their physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment. Areas are well maintained and heated to a comfortable temperature. Children's work is beautifully displayed and the room is set out prior to their arrival, so it looks inviting and interesting. There is a excellent range of equipment throughout the pre-school. The children can access this freely and safely because it is in a good, safe condition and in low, accessible storage. Children enjoy the freedom to move around and play within the very safe boundaries. This is because staffing ratios ensure very good levels of supervision. Staff make very good use of the enclosed play area, which has a patio and barked areas so it can be used all year round. The outdoor space is used as an extension of the indoor

learning environment covering all of the areas of learning and the developmental needs of the children.

Detailed risk assessments are undertaken to ensure children are safe whilst in the pre-school and when on outings. Good safety precautions are in place, such as a buzzer system on the main door and robust management of visitors to the building. Equipment is regularly checked and maintained and children practise fire evacuation procedures so that they become familiar with the routines and learn about keeping themselves safe.

Children are well protected. A detailed written child protection statement is in place, based on current local safeguarding children procedures. All adults working and looking after the children know how to recognise the signs of abuse. They are able to put the child protection procedures into practice if needed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school because the staff establish positive, warm relationships with the children, helping them to feel settled and secure. They make the environment, the resources and the activities, fun and meaningful to them. All of the activities are child-led and follow children's interests. This helps to ensure the children engage in their play and so effortlessly absorb the learning opportunities provided. Staff work well together to provide good quality activities throughout the session.

Those working with younger children use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well to support their development and well-being. They plan for children's individual needs, regularly reviewing these and therefore, planning for their next steps. Children play well together, they learn to share and have respect for each others feelings. All of these young children participate in various activities to encourage their development. Such as digging for treasure in the sandpit, making prints with fruit or sieving the dry pasta and sugar in the tray. They enthusiastically make shapes in the shaving foam, mix cornflour and water or bake pies in the microwave outside.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff who work with the children in the pre-school room have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage, the early learning goals and the stepping stones children take in order to achieve them. They understand how children learn, and apply this as they support children with the rich blend of learning opportunities provided. All staff interact very well with the children and skilfully know when to let children develop their play on their own and when to offer support. Staff are able to assess the children's starting points and build effective plans for the children based on their individual interests. Plans are linked to clear learning intentions and the early learning goals. Staff use their good knowledge and understanding of the individual children to support them well in their development.

The children are progressing well. They listen carefully, use good concentration skills as they listen to a story. They are able to use words, such as author, illustrator and spine and

enthusiastically enjoy explaining the meaning of these words. The children are able to fully express themselves as they confidently paint, make and create in a comfortable, environment where they feel at home and at ease. Children are eager to participate; they enjoy and gain from the practical activities they participate in. They are developing skills outdoors, through playing on wheeled toys and participating in a rich environment, where they practise balancing skills as they cross the bridge. However, these sessions are structured and do not allow children to make choices about being inside or outdoors. Throughout the indoor pre-school environment the children receive excellent visual opportunities to see the printed word, however, these opportunities are not followed through to the outdoor area as labels become damaged due to the weather.

Children are able to be independent. They visit the toilet and see to their personal needs as required, they confidently dress up in role play area. Children enjoy good relationships and listen to each other speak about their ideas and experiences. Children cooperate together to achieve tasks as they discuss what colour the bottles are and how many there are. The children's opportunities to freely express their creativity and develop their skills during art and craft activities are very well supported. Indoors, children readily access tools to assemble and join and make a wide variety of art and crafts which are displayed around the room or carefully placed so they can be taken home to share. Mark-making opportunities are evident throughout the pre-school in every activity, children confidently write shopping lists or cards to loved ones. Mathematical language is introduced through fun activities and daily routines. Staff count the children as they go outside and children confidently use numbers as they count how many children are present at circle time or the number of bears lined up. Children learn to sequence, complete puzzles and to sort. Technology is integral to children's play and is routinely used throughout the pre-school. Children are developing good mouse skills as they perform a slide show on the computer.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a positive attitude towards others and gain a good understanding about the wider world through visitors to the nursery, outings into the local environment and further afield. Excellent links have been developed with the local community with regular trips to the school, allotments and church. The children learn about the wider world through an exciting range of activities and resources, they celebrate many festivals, the most recent being Chinese New Year. They had a visit from the Chinese dragon, enjoyed an authentic banquet and made their own dragon, along with a beautiful wall display of Chinese culture and artefacts. The special needs coordinator has accessed relevant up to date training. This, along with the pre-school's positive attitude fosters an inclusive environment. Children benefit from the calm, consistent attitude of staff. They use timely interventions where they use distraction or clear instruction which protects the children. Positive behaviour is encouraged through consistent use of praise. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding and this contributes significantly to children's well-being in the pre-school. Parents are offered an excellent variety of information on the curriculum, including planned activities and examples of the children's work which can be taken

home or is on display. Parents have superb opportunities to contribute to their children's learning, for example, by receiving regular information about activities through newsletters so they can extend these at home and attractive displays of children's work, all of which have clear written information about the learning outcome. Parents are encouraged to be part of children's learning by bringing in fruit for the current topic or helping maintain the outdoor area. Weekly planning and desired learning outcomes are clearly displayed near the entrance, which enables parents to see at a glance the stimulating activities their children are involved in throughout the session.

Parent's views about their child's needs and interests are actively sought before the child starts at the setting and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Staff ensure that all parents know how their children are progressing and developing. Staff use the information they gather on the children to settle them effectively, for instance, parents are able to attend with their children for as many times as they wish and are encouraged to share as much information as possible. Children benefit greatly from the involvement of their parents in projects which contribute to their good health, safety, development and learning. Parents are invited to visit the pre-school whenever they wish. This creates an excellent shared learning environment where children feel content and secure, and which gives parents confidence in the care and education their children receive. Children benefit from a two way sharing of information between staff and parents which enhances their learning. Parents of children receive information verbally at the end of the session as well as the wealth of written information. All parents have access to their child's development file and are given annual reports, as well as attending exciting graduation ceremonies. Parents speak very highly of the pre-school, the friendly staff and the very good progress their children are making. A written complaints procedure is in place and information for parents regarding complaints is displayed. However, the written procedure does not include all necessary information and the address of the regulator is incorrect.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. All records are kept up to date. Organisation of the premises is good. Each age group has access to their own playroom. Staff have access to relevant training and appropriate support, such as regular staff meetings and team building sessions. They have a clear understanding of policies and procedures. They have formed a strong staff team and work extremely well together to ensure that children are safe, happy well cared for and make good progress.

Management has a clear view of how they want the nursery to progress. There are various steps in place to monitor the provision and they work closely with the early years advisors, seeking advice and putting it into practice. Management has ensured that staff have appropriate training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum, to help children achieve well. Recording systems are systematic through out the pre-school providing information about children's achievements. This enables staff to be aware of how children progress and which areas require further improvement.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous day care inspection a recommendation was made regarding ensuring that times of arrival and departure of children and staff are recorded on the daily register. The setting now records this in a clear manner.

The previous nursery education inspection raised a point for consideration to extend opportunities for older children to develop further mathematical concepts in relation to simple addition and subtraction. Daily activities in mathematics include differentiation for older or more able children and there are a wealth of opportunities for children to add and subtract in a variety of different situations.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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):

- update the complaint procedure in line with current regulations and update Ofsted's contact details.

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):

- further develop labelling and children's independent access to the outdoor area.

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