



Hale Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110542
Inspection date	17 November 2006
Inspector	Marilyn Joy
Setting Address	Village Hall, Hatchett Green, Hale, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, SP6 2NE
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Hale 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?

Hale Pre-school and Toddler Group opened in approximately 1976. It operates from a dedicated room in the village hall and serves the local area.

The pre-school is registered for 12 children aged from two years to five years. There are currently eight children on roll, of these seven children receive funding for nursery education. The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five days a week during term times only. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00. There is one full-time member of staff and two part-time members of staff working with the children. There are two with early years qualifications and one who is currently working towards a relevant qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

A healthy lifestyle is encouraged at the pre-school. Children enjoy daily fresh air, exercise and nutritious snacks of fruit and biscuit followed by either milk or water. Water is accessible for children to help themselves whenever they are thirsty. Younger children confidently ask staff for help. Children carry food to the table and wash up their cups and plates afterwards. These simple tasks, as well as spreading butter and marmite on crackers, encourage children's independence and physical skills. Children sit together in a sociable group with staff and enjoy their food. Relaxed conversations introduce the importance of healthy eating and social skills.

Children learn about their bodies and benefit from good opportunities for developing independence in their personal care. They receive consistent guidance to help them develop appropriate hygiene routines for themselves, such as washing their hands. Staff have a clear understanding of health and hygiene which is evident in their daily practise. Children move confidently indoors and outdoors, and gain skills in using a variety of small and large equipment. Spatial awareness is encouraged when playing games with hoops, running around the garden, making puzzles and creating homes in large boxes.

Children's health and dietary requirements are recorded on registration forms and are complied with. Regulatory documentation is in place and maintained appropriately. Staff have current first aid certificates and a suitably stocked first aid kit is available should a child become ill or have an accident. Clear written procedures are in place regarding health, hygiene and emergencies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because formal written risk assessments, as well as daily checks are completed in order to minimise potential hazards. The premises are secure to prevent children leaving unaccompanied and clear arrangements are in place for the collection of children. Evacuation procedures are practised regularly. However, the register and visitor's book are not completed when children and adults arrive which could impact on their safety, for example, if there was an emergency and the premises needed to be evacuated. The systems for checking the suitability of staff and ensuring children are not left alone with unvetted persons have significantly improved which results in children being protected from harm. Senior staff have attended child protection training and there are clear procedures to be followed should there be a concern about a child.

The dedicated pre-school room is attractively set out and prepared for children's arrival. It is warm and welcoming with displays of children's work decorating the walls. There is a good range of resources which are easily accessible from self-selection storage units or set out on the low level tables. Toys and equipment are clean and in good condition. Toilet facilities adjoin the pre-school room which enables children to access them independently, although, there is no hot water for them to wash their hands unless a kettle is used which could present a hazard.

Outdoor facilities are good. There is a fenced play area with a variety of small and large equipment, a play house and storage.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children experience a broad range of activities that interest and challenge them. They are able to choose what they want to play from the wide range of easily accessible resources available. Staff make good use of their experience and knowledge to provide appropriate levels of support for different abilities. Younger children receive additional support from staff or older children to help them participate in activities, for example to complete a puzzle they are finding difficult. Effective settling-in routines help new children to settle and develop a sense of belonging. They learn from others who show them what to do. They choose the sound lotto and all sit together listening attentively. They help each other to mark off their cards.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Themes are introduced well to encompass all areas of learning and allow ideas to be fully developed. Children collect leaves from the garden to make a dinosaur world in the sand tray, then add water and make comparisons between wet and dry. They design and create dinosaur houses, make a volcano and talk about a sculpture one of them had brought in. They practise using a knife safely when cutting up fruit to make their own dinosaur model. They become engrossed in deciding what fruits or vegetables to use, what they are called and whether their dinosaur needs spikes.

Children's language and problem solving skills are effectively encouraged by staff who are enthusiastic, interested and involved in their play. Impromptu suggestions from the children are encouraged and responded to, for example, a variety of materials are found to turn a large cardboard box into a Tardis. Observation and assessment of children's achievements are used to identify their next steps for learning. These are then discussed at regular meetings and incorporated into the planning, although, spontaneous activities and use of resources are not always recorded or the effectiveness of activities evaluated.

Independence is given a strong emphasis so that children can direct their learning. They are motivated, keen and interested in learning. High levels of confidence and self-esteem are evident in the way they interact with adults and each other. Children listen attentively to stories which are read well by staff. They choose books and handle them well. They have frequent opportunities to practise mark-making and pre-writing skills, although, there are less opportunities for the more able to develop this further or to recognise familiar words or letter. Mathematical language and concepts are introduced naturally into a variety of activities and games. Children measure how tall they are on the height chart and count how many children are present. Some opportunities are missed to extend counting skills and number recognition during routine activities.

Interesting activities encourage children's awareness of the world around them. They experiment with floating and sinking, investigate life cycles and make their own musical chimes by filling bottles with water. They explore a good range of craft materials and investigate a variety of

exciting paint techniques. Imaginative play flourishes through good support from staff. Children pretend to be owls which leads to discussions about what they might eat, involves flying around the room and curling up in their box house. Children learn to negotiate with each other as they play and have fun.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the supportive environment provided by the pre-school. Their individual needs are discussed with parents. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They become aware of the wider society through a variety of activities, celebrations and the inclusion of some positive images within the resources. Effective behaviour management strategies help children to understand what is expected and generally they behave well. They learn to share and take turns during games, such as sound lotto, or whilst playing in the home corner. Children know the routines and enthusiastically help each other, for example, when tidying up or getting ready for snack. Appropriate arrangements are in place for supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Additional advice is sought from other professionals and confidentiality is respected. Liaison with parents is given a strong emphasis.

Partnership with parents is good. They receive a wide range of information about the pre-school, its policies and procedures. A welcoming prospectus provides brief information about the pre-school and the Foundation Stage. Planning is displayed on the notice board to inform parents of topics and activities children may be involved in. Newsletters and daily discussions keep them up-to-date with current issues and their child's activities. Parents are encouraged to belong to the committee and participate in social events. They are well informed about their child's progress. They are able to view written records at least termly, as well as initiate informal discussions with their child's keyworker. Children's record books are attractively set out and provide some meaningful examples of children's achievements to illustrate their progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. It is managed by a strong committee and dedicated leaders who have worked hard to develop robust procedures for the daily operation of the pre-school. They have kept Ofsted informed of changes to the committee, which is a clear improvement since the last inspection. Policies and procedures have been thoroughly reviewed and updated to reflect current guidance. Space is used well to provide safe and exciting areas for children to play, although hand washing facilities are limited.

Clear systems have been developed for the recruitment and vetting of staff. Formal induction procedures for new staff or individual plans for professional development of existing staff have not yet been formulated, although they have been identified as areas for improvement by the committee. Most documentation is maintained appropriately, although attendance records are not completed on arrival. Records are kept securely on the premises and are available for inspection.

Leadership and management is good. Effective deployment of staff means children are well-supported as they play and learn. Informal systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the nursery education which means areas for development are not always identified. Children benefit from the high ratio and enthusiasm of staff. Staff work well together to promote positive outcomes for children and enable them to make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

CARE

At the last inspection the quality of care was judged as inadequate. The pre-school needed to improve its systems for checking that staff are suitable to work with children and make sure Ofsted is informed of significant events. Systems have now been introduced to ensure rigorous checks are completed for all staff to ensure they are suitable to work at the pre-school. Ofsted has been kept informed about changes in the committee which means appropriate checks can be conducted on the registered person to ensure they are suitable to be in this responsible position.

NURSERY EDUCATION

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to increase opportunities to share information with parents about their child's development in line with the stepping stones and continue to develop records to ensure that individual developmental needs are met. Children's records are shared with parents at least termly. Parents are able to take their records home and add their own comments. A booklet with photos and annotated examples of children's achievements provides an informative record of their progress in each area of learning. Children's next steps for learning are identified and included in the record. Staff then focus on these when planning and presenting activities.

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):

- ensure the attendance register is completed on arrival for children, staff and visitors, and develop procedures for the induction and professional development of staff
- make improvements to the toilet facilities to ensure hot water is provided.

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):

- continue to develop the systems for monitoring and evaluating activities and children's progress
- find ways to capitalise on everyday situations to increase opportunities for children to become familiar with words and letters, numerals and counting.

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