



Compton and Shawford Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110424
Inspection date	01 November 2006
Inspector	Elly Bik-Kuen Wong
Setting Address	Reeves Scout Hall, Martin's Field, Compton, Winchester, Hampshire, SO21 2AZ
Telephone number	01962 717585
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Registered person	Compton & Shawford 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?

Compton and Shawford Preschool was registered in 1978. It operates from two rooms in the Reeves Scout Hall in Compton, near Winchester. The pre-school is managed and run by a voluntary parents' committee, and serves mainly the local area.

There are currently 26 children aged from two to under five years on roll. This includes 17 funded three or four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children with special needs, and those for whom English is an additional language. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 11:45, Monday to Friday.

There are a total of six staff and two long-term students, and usually four to five staff work with the children each session. Three staff have relevant early years qualifications ranging from

NVQ level 2 to 4. Two members of staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from an early years teacher/mentor of the Local Authority. It has been accredited under the 'Aiming for Quality' Accreditation Scheme run by the Pre-school Learning Alliance (2005).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have consistent and daily opportunities to practise good personal hygiene. Many show emerging independence in accessing hygiene facilities and resources, and are confident in 'self-care' during toileting and hand washing. At circle time, staff talk to children about the presence of germs which they cannot see, and children are familiar with the routine of wriggling their hands to 'wash off' the germs, such as before eating. This helps children to learn the importance of good hygiene for their own health.

Children are well protected from germs and infection at the setting because staff follow good hygiene practices. They clean and/or disinfect tables and surfaces used by children, and wash or clean toys from time to time. Some of the staff team have completed food hygiene training and help to ensure that snacks and drinks are prepared in a safe and hygienic manner for children. Parents are made aware of their responsibility should their child become unwell; they support staff in preventing cross infection by keeping any sick child away.

Staff show clear commitment to promoting children's good health and growth. Children's nutritional needs are met well because staff provide a good variety of nutritious snacks each day, including fresh fruits, dried raisins, breads and cheese. Children also enjoy drinks of milk or water at break time which help to prevent dehydration. They practise pouring their own drinks from jugs, thus developing good muscle strength and hand-eye co-ordination.

Staff show clear understanding about recording accidents and the administration of medicines. They also ensure that parents are kept well informed by being asked to sign the entries. All regular staff have current first aid qualifications, and are able to assist children who may be affected by accidents and emergencies. Procedures are in place to record children's dietary and health needs, including any allergies, and all staff are kept up-to-date about such information to promote children's well-being.

Children benefit greatly from the pre-school's strong emphasis on physical development. Children free flow into the garden daily for fresh air, sand play and exercise on the climbing frame/slide. There are outstanding practices in providing routinely a wide range of indoor physical play, which enthuse and motivate children to exercise and become healthy. Children persevere over balance beams on an obstacle course, become very active with the parachute game, and show increasing dexterity when they roll and spin hula hoops with their hand or body. Children make their own snacks as a weekly activity, including cutting up fruits and vegetables, and develop excellent manipulative skills while using child-safe knives and peelers. All these activities help children to develop good control of different parts of their body, as well as balance and co-ordination. After intense physical activities, staff skilfully ask children

if they are hot and whether they can feel (with their hand) their heart beating fast 'like a drum', thus developing their awareness of what exercise does for their body.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure manner due to good staff deployment to support and supervise children. Staff also show vigilance in assessing and reducing hazards to protect children. Apart from detailed risk assessments completed every half term with the help of the Health and Safety member of the Management Committee, staff carry out daily premises checks to ensure that both the indoors and outside play area are safe for children.

On a routine basis, staff work to good safety procedures, such as locking the front entrance and the back garden gates to make absolutely sure that children are secure within the premises. Staff have an emergency fire plan which children practise regularly during fire drills. When children are taken on local outings, such as to the local park, staff ensure that children walk in a safe manner by holding onto a long rope, one on each side. Good procedures are in place to monitor who has access to the children. Only parents or their representatives who are known to the staff are allowed to collect children, while staff monitor the presence of visitors and parents consistently by asking them to sign in and out. To safeguard children, all new staff are required to complete Criminal Record Bureau checks, and children are never left on their own with unchecked persons. Staff have good systems in place for recording accidents, incidents and pre-existing injuries. Children are safeguarded because staff have a sound understanding of child protection procedures.

Children move around safely both indoors and in the garden, accessing a wide range of play resources which are available daily in the pre-school. Resources are rotated from the large storage cupboard and set up on the floor or low tables which are easily accessible to children. There are interesting wall displays (on the learning themes), children's art work, and vibrant posters to welcome children and families from different language and cultural backgrounds. There is also useful information on the notice boards both in the entrance porch and in the hall to inform parents and staff members of the setting's operation. Outside, the passage way to the garden has been resurfaced and made safe, while the climbing frame/slide is set up on a safety surface to prevent accidents.

Staff use the theme of Bonfire night to talk to children about the hazards of fireworks, so children gain safety awareness. Staff use the occasion of their walk to the park to help children learn about road hazards and how to cross the road safely. Staff enlist the help of a visiting policeman to help children learn about road safety and stranger danger, while a fire fighter talks to children about fire hazards and how to fight fire. All these activities help young children gain safety awareness, thus learning to care for and protect themselves.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly on arrival as they are welcomed back after half-term by the pre-school leader at the door. Children are supported by their parents to pick out their name card for registration, and feel a sense of achievement. Key workers are at hand to talk to and settle their key work children, though most children feel confident enough to go straight to access the readily available play resources without assistance. Children are happy and engrossed in their own chosen play activities, some of which are related to the imminent festivals of Halloween and Bonfire night. Play resources are changed after snack time, so children benefit from a wide range of stimulating and satisfying play within one session. Children can also free flow into the compact but well set up outside play area, and enjoy sand play in the large wooden sand enclosure or exercise on the plastic climbing frame/slide. Although nearly all children are over three, staff have regard to the Birth to three matters framework when observing and planning for the youngest children, so that there are ample age-appropriate activities for promoting their enjoyment and development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff team consist of experienced and qualified members as well as those with lesser degrees of experience and training. The leader/manager is very experienced, and shows good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Although different staff have differing levels of understanding of the Foundation Stage, the leader provides good leadership and effective support to ensure that the staff team as a whole plan and deliver a balanced curriculum for children overall. Through daily discussions and formal meetings, such as for planning, the less experienced or trained staff are supported to continually improve their knowledge of the stepping stones and early learning goals. As a result the quality of educational experiences provided for children is good overall, helping them to make positive progress in all areas of learning. There is a generally balanced curriculum which covers all areas of the Foundation Stage. However, there are some minor weaknesses in teaching and learning where staff are not clearly aware of the relevant stepping stones, or do not make effective use of routine or incidental opportunities to extend children's learning.

Staff are confident with their system for making long, medium and short terms plans. The long term plans identify the main themes and topics, which can be changed to suit spontaneous situations. During medium term planning, the whole staff team discuss the progress of individual children and use this information to plan more specific topics and activities that are relevant to them. The short-term plans list all the learning objectives while linking them to the different stepping stones, and the names of children who are to be extended in each of those areas. On a daily basis, activities are evaluated for future improvement, which enables staff to adapt resources and activities to truly motivate and enthuse individual children.

Key workers observe and record individual children's interests and learning style, for example, through time sampling. Each child has a progress record book which includes staff's observations/comments, photographs of the child's play, and samples of her/his work. Staff also assess each child's learning by completing the Hampshire record of achievements, indicating when certain stepping stones are achieved. All these help staff to track a child's progress, build

on her/his interests, and formulate appropriate plans to move the child onto the next stage. For example, staff encourage the more able children to practise writing their name in the computer rota book, which improves their writing skills. Also, children who like gardening are encouraged to help prepare the pumpkin lantern for Halloween. While they feel and experience the different textures inside, children's vocabulary is extended by staff who prompt them to describe the textures with words, such as 'slippery' and 'stringy'.

Staff help children learn through direct first hand experiences, for example, during an activity to make vegetable soup. Staff interact and engage very well with children to help them experience some common vegetables first hand. Children are helped to identify the names of the vegetables with the help of a poster, where they come from (and not just from supermarkets), and to practise using tools, such as knives, safely. However, there are some missed opportunities for the incidental discussion of healthy eating involving vegetables, which is important for raising children's health awareness. This is also true at snack times because although children enjoy a good range of healthy snacks, not enough use is made of this routine to develop children's awareness of healthy eating.

Staff provide good resources to facilitate children's learning. Children are able to make choices from a wide range of stimulating books, play resources and activities, which impacts on their enjoyment and good behaviour. Staff display visual prompts about the daily routines on the wall, which are for helping the younger children or those who do not communicate well verbally, including those with special educational needs, and children for whom English is an additional language. There are also interesting wall displays, reference books and artefacts to support the teaching of specific themes, such as about the recent transport theme and the imminent festival celebrations. Children are happy dressing up in Halloween and other costumes, or pushing 'baby' in the pram during imaginative role play. Children can access creative materials easily from the craft tables and low-level labelled drawers for their chosen creative play. Children are routinely encouraged to mix their own paints and identify two or more colours as they paint. When making their own cat masks, children choose their own decorations and cut and stick them, thus practising scissors skills and how to handle glue. They handle musical instruments during free play and planned group activities, during which they sing and wriggle to the music that they make.

Children interact well with others and engage in spontaneous chatter. Many are confident in explaining their ideas and feelings, for example, when they talk about what they did at half term, or whether they are scared about Halloween. Children listen attentively and concentrate well during circle and story time. They access a good selection of children's books and seek out staff to share the books with them. At circle time, children are taught a phonetic sound/letter by staff each day using a large alphabet book. The children whose names begin with the same sound are identified, often by the children themselves, and their names are read out to illustrate the teaching point. Staff also encourage children to do 'air writing' of that sound, thus helping them to link sounds to letters. Children routinely practise recognising their name (at registration and snack time), and have chances to make marks or write their own name on their work, thus gaining an understanding that text carries meaning.

Children often practise counting when doing number games/songs and during routines like circle time, when staff prompt them to count the number of children. Children are familiar with

different shapes, such as circles and triangles, because there are ample planned and incidental opportunities for this aspect of learning. Staff plan activities, such as the Butterfly game, to help children compare numbers, such as two more or two less. There are planned themes about 'big' and 'small' and 'how tall and heavy am I?' to develop children's concepts of size, measure and weight. However, staff generally make inadequate use of incidental opportunities, daily routines and children's self chosen play to extend children's understanding of mathematical concepts involving calculation, volume, size and position.

Children show a good sense of place when they free flow into the outside play area. In spring/summer, children help to plant seeds, water and care for plants like pansies and strawberries in outdoor tubs/pots. Staff encourage children to observe their changes and growth, and gain an awareness about nature and the environment. Children handle modern technology with ease, such as tills, phones, programmable toys and the computer. Staff set up the computer programmes and offer support when needed, although a lot of children, especially the older ones, are confident with mouse control and navigate their way easily around such programmes. Staff provide them with a sand timer so they develop a good sense of time when they use the computer. Children practise self-control by waiting for their turn with the computer.

Children build good relationships with staff and their peers. Children enjoy building 3-D models together using large building blocks, and develop good spatial reasoning, which is also evident when they manage to fit all the large blocks back in the compact storage box at tidy-up time. Staff respect children's choice of activities, for example, to play at the computer corner, while the rest of the group participate in circle time. Staff give children alternative activities to keep them content and well occupied, for example, those children who do not want to have the vegetable soup are led by staff to look at Compton Bear's photo record of its adventures instead. As a result children do not have to wait around feeling idle or bored, but spend their time on activities that interest them, which in turn leads to their good behaviour.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities and treat each child as an individual. Key workers and other staff take the time to get to know each child and family. All children and families receive good support from staff, who respect parents' preference about how their child is being cared for. There are good systems in place to meet any special needs and requirements, such as in health, diet, language and education. Parents receive a prospectus which includes useful information on the group's operation, the teaching of the Foundation Stage and the qualifications and roles of the different staff members. There are also informative newsletters and wall notices to keep parents well informed about their children's care and learning. Staff build up good rapport and positive relationships with parents, many of whom volunteer their help on the parent helpers rota. Children benefit from this close communication which ensures that their needs are met effectively.

Staff encourage children to take care of Compton Bear and invite it back to their home. This motivates a child to share information about their joint experience as well as her/his home life, thus enabling staff to build on children's interests at the pre-school. Staff celebrate individual children's birthdays with a simple ceremony to help develop their sense of community. They

act on parents' views and take account of the interests and culture of different families when they plan activities. For example, the themes initially planned for a term are altered due to the presence of new children, whose families provide new knowledge and resources to help the pre-school celebrate new festivals which these families know well. There are maps, vibrant posters and multi-lingual wall displays with positive images to welcome children and families from different language and cultural backgrounds. Children have access to a good selection of multi-cultural resources, and learn about the wider world through celebrating different festivals, such as Christmas, Diwali and Thanksgiving. Through discussions and first hand experiences, children also learn to respect differences, such as special needs and abilities.

Children show enthusiasm, motivation and perseverance in their play and learning, for example, when they help to make vegetable soup. They show a sense of responsibility and achievement with the tidy-up routine. Staff provide good audio clues through playing a music tape, and they also remind children when needed. Most children show patience and involvement, as well as good spatial awareness when they put back toys into the right drawer or box. Children are good with taking turns because staff train them to use a sand timer for timing certain play activities. Staff also give children the role of 'special helpers' to promote children's self-importance and good relationships. A child who wears the 'special helper' badge is encouraged to be helpful towards others, such as the younger children; the special helper also gets to choose an activity that she/he likes as a reward.

Staff praise and encourage children, so their behaviour is good. Children know clearly what is expected of them. Staff help children to discuss and make simple behaviour rules which they can understand, such as moving around with care and being kind to others. Staff skilfully use the example of Compton Bear arguing with its cousin to make children understand that bad or unkind behaviour makes others sad. Parents read about the setting's behaviour policy in the prospectus and help reinforce them with their children at home, thus promoting children's good behaviour consistently. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive good quality information about the curriculum and the Foundation Stage, which improves their understanding about how their children's learning is organised. They receive detailed newsletters each half-term about the forthcoming learning topics and activities, together with a list of the intended stepping stones under each of the six areas of learning. Staff actively encourage parents to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways. For example, parents support their child's learning about train transport by taking their child on a local miniature steam train ride. Parents are also encouraged to contribute resources for their child to learn through 'show and tell'. Some parents are actively involved in all children's learning, for example, by celebrating special festivals with them, or giving a talk about their job as a nurse, fire fighter or policeman in the community. The good partnership with parents continues to promote positive outcomes in children's education.

Parents are requested to complete a questionnaire to share information about their child's needs and initial attainment on entry. This helps staff to plan appropriately to motivate and enthuse individual children. Key workers share information with parents daily on what their child has done and learnt. Staff promote the parent helper system which allows many parents not only to give practical help to staff, but also observe their own child's play and progress.

Each parent helper is also given a slot by the key worker to go through the relevant child's record of achievements. For the rest of the parents/carers, the staff team have begun to invite them to stay for about ten minutes each morning to look at their child's record of achievements jointly. All these measures keep parents/carers well informed of their child's stage of development and his/her next step, so that they can work with staff effectively to help their child reach his/her full potential.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from well organised daily routines which run smoothly as staff plan activities and prepare resources well in advance. Children can make choices as they move around, and are well stimulated and happily occupied, which impacts on their good behaviour. Staff use their time well to support and monitor children's play. Children benefit from effective staff deployment based on the generous ratio of one adult to four or five children. It allows children's needs to be met effectively, and their play and learning to be well supported.

The staff team have good relationships and work well as a team. They discuss their work informally during 15-minute meetings each week to talk about next week. They also meet formally twice every half term to make plans and discuss other matters. The Management Committee have put in place good systems for recruiting and checking new staff to ensure that they are suitable for their roles. For example, all new staff undertake Criminal Record Bureau checks. Applicants are also vetted on health grounds, though the procedures are not comprehensive for safeguarding children. New staff and parent volunteers are inducted effectively, while there are also sound procedures for appraising and developing existing staff. There is a good operational plan, and its comprehensive policies and procedures are implemented effectively to ensure children's health and safety. All required paper work is in place and is generally well organised, stored securely and maintaining confidentiality. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management is good. The Management Committee have good systems in place for supporting the staff team. The Committee meet monthly to discuss operational matters as well issues identified by the leader/manager, who is in charge of the day-to-day running of the setting. The chairperson meets informally with the leader every week to discuss any important or urgent matters. This ensures good communication and liaison between the staff team and the Committee. Clear roles and responsibilities are identified for each staff member, ensuring that good resources and support are in place for children's care and learning. The chairperson is pro-active in continually reviewing the group's policies and procedures to promote good childcare practices and meet registration requirements. Through the hard work of the Committee and the staff, the setting has been accredited under the Pre-school Learning Alliance's Accreditation Scheme.

The devoted staff team are supported with resources by the Committee to continually improve their knowledge and skills through training. While some staff members are participating in formal training programmes, the whole staff team continually develop their knowledge and skills in the Foundation Stage and childcare matters through informal discussions and staff meetings. There is a good spectrum of skills among the staff team. The leader/manager provides

good on-going development opportunities for the less experienced staff. She also gives the staff team a strong lead in evaluating their work regularly, so that everyone can contribute their ideas for improving practices and the curriculum. Together they evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, and draw up action or improvement plans to further improve the care and education for all children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure that the complaints procedure includes contact details for Ofsted as the regulating authority, and to share this information with parents. The complaints procedure now refers to Ofsted as an agency that parents can contact regarding complaints and parents have easy view of an Ofsted poster in the reception hall which shows Ofsted's contact telephone number should parents want to pass on any comments.

The pre-school was also asked to provide a wider range of resources reflecting positive images of disability. There are now some resources, such as books and a poster, which show positive images of disability, and the pre-school is pro-active in promoting positive awareness and respect for those children who may look different or go about their daily life in a slightly different way due to special needs or impairment.

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.

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):

- enhance the procedure for vetting new staff on health grounds, in order to safeguard children.

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 and improve the staff team's knowledge of the Foundation Stage and stepping stones, so as to further enhance the curriculum and children's learning experiences
- Make effective use of routine and incidental opportunities to raise children's awareness about healthy eating, and to extend their understanding of mathematical concepts such as about calculation, size, volume and position.

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