

Charlton and District Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511329
Inspection date	19 January 2007
Inspector	Doreen Forsyth
Setting Address	St Thomas's Church Hall, Charlton, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 4AZ
Telephone number	07979 841318
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Registered person	Charlton & District 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Charlton and District Pre-School opened in 1978. The pre-school is organised by a management committee and operates from two rooms at St Thomas's Church in the village of Charlton, Andover, Hampshire.

The setting is registered to care for up to 38 children aged between two and five years old. There are currently 44 children on roll. This includes 32 children who are in receipt of government funding for nursery education. Children attend from in and around the Andover area. The setting welcomes children with disabilities or learning difficulties, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five mornings a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00 from Mondays to Fridays. There are additional afternoon sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 to 15:00.

There are eight full or part-time staff working with the children. Three of these have relevant early years childcare qualifications at level 3. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn suitable health and hygiene routines; for example, they understand the importance of washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet, but they sometimes share water when hand washing which poses a risk of cross infection. Children are usually well cared for if they are ill; the pre-school has good illness exclusion policies in place and all the required records concerning accidents, parental permissions and medications are well kept. However, children are vulnerable if they have an accident as there are no staff in the setting that have current first aid training.

Children learn about healthy living in their topic work and have discussed the importance of healthy foods. At snack times they are provided with nutritious snacks such as dried fruit or savoury biscuits, however, the snacks offered are not often varied. The older children usually have access to drinking water during the play sessions, if younger children are thirsty they have to ask for a drink.

Children have some opportunities for physical play and exercise. In good weather they can play in the enclosed church gardens, and occasionally they use wheeled toys outside. At the end of most sessions children take part in some physical activity, such as playing with a parachute or enjoying vigorous action rhymes and songs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and safe environment. They use two areas of the church, a small side room and the main church. The church can be dark sometimes, but the staff have used display boards and equipment to make the environment welcoming and attractive.

The pre-school is kept safe and secure, there are good security procedures in place, such as alarms on the fire exit doors. Staff regularly risk assess the premises and have identified and minimised any possible hazards as much as possible. Good procedures are in place to ensure children are collected by the correct adults. Children sometimes play outside in the enclosed gardens; staff ensure they are very well supervised and do not have access to the nearby busy road. All required fire safety equipment is in place, children regularly practise how to evacuate the building in an emergency.

Children use a good range of safe and suitable resources which the staff have to pack away after each session. The resources provided help children to progress appropriately in the Foundation Stage of learning. Some of the resources provided for younger children are not very appropriate to their ages and stage of development.

Children are well safeguarded because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put the appropriate procedures into place if necessary. Parents are well informed about the setting's child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happily to pre-school, they are very aware of the daily routines and once they have self-registered they sit patiently for circle time. Some younger children that are new to the setting experience difficulty in leaving their parents, however, staff comfort them well, helping them to begin to settle and enjoy their play. The manager has introduced the Birth to threes matters framework into the pre-school and the daily planning now incorporates birth to threes for younger children, leading onto the Foundation Stage for over threes. Children using the smaller 'Foxcotte room' do not have enough access to age-appropriate resources and activities such as free painting, messy play, tactile and malleable resources, and appropriate climbing and balancing resources to help them develop their large muscle skills. This lack of suitable activities limits the learning and progress of younger children.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, although not all staff have a appropriate understanding of the Foundation stage of learning. Children that are using the main hall are achieving and their learning is well promoted. The manager plans a wide range of activities that promote all areas of children's learning, except in their freedom to express their own creative ideas. The manager uses the records of achievement she keeps of children's progress to identify any gaps in their learning and to plan for individual children's next steps. This planning does not show what staff expect children to learn from an adult-led activity and is not linked closely enough to the different aspects of the early learning goals, which makes it difficult for staff to monitor the success of the activities they lead. However, overall children are progressing well.

Children are learning right from wrong and begin to think about the needs of others. At circle time they discuss the importance of taking turns and sharing. They are becoming confident, for example, they clearly answer to their own names at registration time. They have some opportunities to develop their independence, they serve themselves at snack-time and are able to select some of their own resources and toys. Children enjoy books and stories, they listen well and can retell the stories. They confidently retold the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' which a member of staff skilfully helped them to re-enact to music. They begin to recognise their own names and some children are able to control pencils well to write some recognisable letters.

Children begin to count and use mathematical ideas in their everyday play and at group times. For example, at registration they help to count and record the children present each session. They are able to recognise numbers to ten and beyond. When using construction resources such as the wooden train set or building with bricks they learn about position and shape and begin to solve simple problems. They all understood that only three children could play in the play castle at one time. Children learn well about their environment and the natural world through their topic work. They have visitors such as a police officer or the local vicar into the setting. At circle times they discuss the weather, learn the days of the week and talk about the changing seasons. They begin to learn about their own and others festivals, special events and cultures, they celebrate festivals such as Easter and Christmas and Chinese New Year. Children use some resources to help them explore everyday information technology, but these resources are quite limited.

Children's imaginations are well developed through role and imaginative play, they enjoy dressing up. Music is well promoted in the setting; children use a selection of musical instruments at group times to sing their welcome and goodbye songs, classical music is often playing while the children play. Children can sing songs from memory very well. Children have some opportunities to use different craft and malleable resources or to explore paint and colour to freely express their imaginations, but many craft activities offered are adult-led and are chosen to promote the different topics. Children have some opportunities to play with sand or play dough. Children's physical development is promoted. They usually end each session with a movement activity, such as playing with a parachute or taking part in ring and singing games. Children use resources such as scissors, pencils and scoops in the sand to help them develop their small muscle movements. Children enjoy using bikes in a sectioned off area of the hall, they can skilfully control the bikes which helps them develop a sense of space.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed into the setting, including any that may have learning difficulties or disabilities, or any children that speak English as an additional language. There is a qualified Special Needs Co-ordinator in place, who is responsible for ensuring all children are helped to learn appropriately, and that all children are included. Children begin to learn about the importance of diversity through the resources and activities provided, such as dressing up clothes, books and small world toys; but the posters and displays in the setting do not effectively promote children's learning about different backgrounds. The vicar from the church they occupy regularly visits the setting, telling the children stories and expanding their moral and social knowledge and understanding. Children's Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development is fostered.

Children are encouraged to behave appropriately. Staff use a range of suitable strategies to promote good behaviour. These include reward stickers for the 'friendly fish' display, and lots of praise and encouragement. The setting displays the rules of the setting, staff clearly remind the children of some of these at group times each session.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive a well presented information pack when their children enrol at the pre-school. They are welcome to help in the setting and to serve on the management committee; they help with fund raising events. There are informative notice boards and regular newsletters. Suitable complaints procedures are displayed and a log of any complaints kept. Parents are able to exchange information on an informal basis before or after each session, but there is not a key worker for each child that parents and children can especially relate to.

Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress in relation to nursery education, there are regular parent's evenings and open days. Parents are able to see the records kept on their children at any time and are invited in to discuss the assessment records each term. At these meetings parents are given a target sheet, based on the assessment records, which suggests activities they can do at home to help their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The pre-school ensures all adults in the setting that have unsupervised access to the children are suitable to do so by using an appropriate vetting, employment and induction procedure.

Staff are encouraged to train and all staff attend relevant short courses; but at present because there are new members of staff in place, not enough staff have appropriate qualifications at level 2 or 3. However, the manager is suitably qualified. Staff have not yet updated their first aid training. Children are well supported and receive good care and attention because the manager ensures that correct adult/child ratios are maintained at all times.

Most of the required records and documentation including a comprehensive operational plan, are in place and are well kept, but the records of children's, staff and visitor's attendance lacks some details. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is good. The manager who is very experienced in childcare, has clear aims and objectives for the setting and the children's learning and progress. The chairperson is new to the role, but is keen to support the manager and staff in providing good quality care and education. Staff are supported in their training, but do not have appraisals to identify their professional developmental needs. The manager is able to identify and value the staff's strengths and areas for improvement.

Discussion at staff meetings is used to monitor the provision and the curriculum provided. The manager and chairperson evaluates the progress of the strengths of the setting by using parent's feedback questionnaires, by the feedback from outside professionals and by attending local pre-school cluster meetings.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two recommendations set at the last care inspection and one point for consideration from the nursery education inspection. One care recommendation and the nursery education point for consideration concerned the organisation of snack time. Children now benefit from choosing healthier snacks at their mid morning break. They are encouraged to help themselves to their drinks and snacks which helps to foster children's independence.

The other recommendation was concerning staff qualifications. After the last inspection the setting encouraged staff training and staff qualification requirements were met. However, there have recently been staff changes and at present the pre-school does not have enough qualified staff to fully promote all children's learning, an action plan to meet the correct staff qualification requirements will be carried forward from this inspection.

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 that 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 that there is an appropriately qualified first-aider in the setting at all times
- develop an action plan that sets out how staff qualification requirements will be met
- provide the younger children in the smaller room with more age-appropriate activities to support their learning and development.

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):

- provide all children with more opportunities to develop their own creativity using a wide range of different resources
- include in the planning the learning intention for adult-led activities and ensure these planned activities are based on the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

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