



Hardwick Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY242519
Inspection date	04 October 2006
Inspector	Jane Plested
Setting Address	John Bridles Hall, Lower Road, Hardwick, Buckinghamshire, HP22 4DZ
Telephone number	07754 091400
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Registered person	Hardwick 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?

Hardwick Pre-School opened in 1993, it is managed by a voluntary committee. It operates from John Bridles Hall in the village of Hardwick, in Buckinghamshire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.00 during term times. An extra session is available to children the term before they go to school. This session is between 12.00 and 13.15 one day a week. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 31 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the village and surrounding areas. The pre-school has facilities to support children with learning difficulties.

The setting employs seven staff. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn appropriate personal hygiene routines. For example, practitioners always ensure that children clean their hands before their snack. Children know when they need to blow their nose and feel confident to ask a practitioner for a tissue. A box of tissues is continually available and accessible to children in the setting. However, when using the toilet independently children sometimes forget to wash their hands. Children have to share a towel, which poses a risk of cross infection. Practitioners make sure the premises are clean and always wipe down tables for children's meals. First aid resources are suitable and five practitioners hold a current first aid certificate. Records for accidents and medication are well maintained.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities to aid their physical development within the planned curriculum. These take place both indoors and outside. During the inspection, children run around outside excitedly chasing bubbles. Occasionally they bump into each other as they develop spatial awareness. They develop increasing control of their bodies as they use ride on wheeled toys, such as trikes, and balance on scooters or stilts.

Children tuck in to a healthy snack mainly consisting of a variety of fruits, such as bananas, apples, grapes or oranges. They know that these are healthy foods and name biscuits as less healthy options. All children's dietary requirements recorded at admission and a list of children's allergies are displayed in the kitchen. However, this is a public hall so this information can be seen by other hall users. Drinking water is continually available for children so they can help themselves if they are thirsty. Drinks of milk and water are provided at snack time, from which children can choose and are allowed to pour their own, thus developing a sense of independence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to an inviting and well set out environment. They use a wide range of safe and suitable furniture and play resources. These ensure children make progress in all areas of their development and are engaged in activity. Play resources are stored with children's good access in mind so they develop independence and develop their own ideas during their play.

Children benefit from the generally good awareness amongst practitioners of how to keep them safe. Staff minimise the risk of accidental injury to children by checking the hall daily and complete a detailed annual risk assessment of the setting on a regular basis. Suitable fire safety equipment is in place and most practitioners can accurately describe the evacuation plan. The outdoor area is secure and provides ample space for children to play, however, there is some evidence of the playground surface beginning to break up and plants with berries are within reach, posing a risk to children.

Children's welfare is important to the setting. There are clear procedures to maintain children's security, such as close monitoring of doors, locked gates during outdoor play and procedures for collection by another adult. Most practitioners are familiar with the group's child protection

procedures. They keep their knowledge in this area of their work up-to-date through regular training so that children remain safe in their care. There are clear systems for recording children's pre-existing injuries and there is a detailed child protection policy in place to cover this aspect of the setting's work. Parents have access to this policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are encouraged to develop independence. They receive a warm greeting on arrival and effective support during separation. Children immediately settle to their play in the role-play area, at the water trough or sit and complete colourful drawings. They are familiar with the routine and layout of the setting; this contributes to a strong sense of security. They receive effective support from practitioners during activities so that they learn and develop new skills. They are building trusting relationships with adults and are confident asking for help with putting on backpacks and as they learn to use scissors.

Nursery Education

Children are confident and highly involved in their activities. They show a range of feelings, such as excitement when chasing bubbles, enthusiasm during music and concern about others when they accidentally knock into them. Children also have a sense of pride in their work. They are developing relationships and making attachments with their peers, often addressing each other by name and playing together.

Children initiate conversations with others during role-play and respond to practitioners' questions at 'show and tell'. They talk imaginatively about making potions and practitioners support this by introducing the names of precious metals. Most children can recognise their name and some can name and sound the letters. Children are very attentive during very well told stories, such as 'Peace At Last' and use books independently. They enthusiastically join in with familiar rhymes. Children practise their emergent writing in the role-play area, where they use writing resources, such as pencils and ink stamps, to create paperwork within an office scenario. Children sometimes name their work spontaneously.

Children can count confidently, some to 10 or above. There are displays of number lines in the setting, so that children become familiar with numerals. They have some opportunities to understand calculation as part of the planned curriculum. However, practitioners do not readily reinforce this during play or the daily routine. Children match and compare and can name shapes, such as a circle or triangle, and a more able child knows a diamond. Children spontaneously use some mathematical language when they describe animals, for example, they say 'a giraffe is tall and has a long neck'.

Children explore a wide range of textures and investigate the properties of water. They do this by pouring water from jugs and observing it pass through a watermill. Plans and evaluations show children enjoyed observing what happens when water is added to jelly crystals. They model with dough and skilfully construct towers with bricks. Some resources are available to promote an interest in technology and children are starting to learn about different people and cultures. They develop an understanding of British traditions as the setting joins in with

community events, such as the 'Whitchurch May Fest'. Children explore the natural world as they collect leaves and learn about the life cycle of butterflies through activities and the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. They are also encouraged to develop a good understanding of time and place through the curriculum.

Children use the outdoor area daily. Here they learn to run, use ride-on vehicles and jump through hoops. They develop a sense of balance and co-ordination as they learn to use stilts and receive praise when they are successful. Children use a range of small and large equipment and demonstrate increasing co-ordination. Younger children persevere in learning new skills, such as cutting with scissors, and develop their dexterity by threading cotton reels. Children manipulate and explore materials, such as dough, by patting or vigorously rolling and squeezing to make a sausage.

Children know a wide range of colours and some can differentiate shades, such as dark and light green. They explore paint in a variety of ways and concentrate as they complete drawings and colour in templates of an aeroplane. They enjoy imaginative play, becoming completely absorbed when collecting resources to mix 'magic potions'. Children use the role-play area and resources well. They enthusiastically join in with favourite songs and have fun as they use instruments, such as bells, tambourines and mouth organs. Group activities allow children to explore a range of sounds as they make snoring and clock noises and use shakers to imitate the sound of a dripping tap. This provides children with opportunities to listen to each other and explore differences in sound.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making clear progress within the Foundation Stage curriculum because of the effective planning. Practitioners provide an appealing and challenging indoor environment and plan the outdoor play. They use open-ended questions so that children have opportunities to think, for example, "What noises do birds make?" They provide plenty of opportunities for children to make choices and develop their own ideas, particularly in their imaginative play. Practitioners regularly assess children's progress; the development records show a link to the stepping-stones for learning but these are only dated by term. This limits practitioners' ability to assess how rapidly children are progressing. However, they are beginning to plan for the next stage for learning by offering differentiation within the activities. Systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties.

Practitioners are very good role models, addressing children politely by name, frequently offering praise and encouragement and promoting the development of good manners. They provide opportunities for children to be helpful. These strategies positively contribute to children feeling strong feelings of self worth and promote the good behaviour observed in the setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from practitioners' knowledge of them as individuals. They are frequently encouraged to develop skills for independence, such as pouring their own drink. Practitioners provide a good range of resources so children can make their own choices and develop their ideas. There is specialist equipment available to help children master tasks, such as using scissors. The resources to promote children's awareness of the wider world are increasing.

Children behave well. They respond to the setting's effective strategies to promote good behaviour. Children play together harmoniously, for example, during role-play and they share resources, such as small world animals. Overall, the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents and carers have access to ample written information about the setting, the routine and the curriculum. This is available within the prospectus, parental information files and termly newsletters and on the notice boards. Parents spoken to by the inspector are very happy with the care and education their children receive. They value the range of activities children experience highly and find the staff friendly and approachable and supportive during the settling period. They feel that they receive good information about their child's care via records and activities. Overall, the partnership with parents of children receiving nursery education is good. Parents receive some encouragement to contribute to their child's education, for example, helping children provide resources for 'show and tell'. However, some feel that they would like a more pro-active approach to the sharing of their child's development record, although they are aware that they can ask to see it at any time.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children experience a clear routine with which they and the staff are familiar, thus creating a strong sense of security. Children participate in a wide range of activities. They enter an inviting play environment and settle to their activities quickly. The indoor area is well maintained but outside there are some risks to children's safety. Children are confident within their surroundings and relationships.

The setting is generally well organised. Staff appointment, management and induction procedures are satisfactory. However, a new staff member has not read the setting's policies and procedures and as a result, she is not fully familiar with these. Practitioners are encouraged to undertake training and the setting is working towards meeting its action plan regarding staff qualifications. All permanent members of staff have training in first aid and child protection, thus ensuring children's welfare. Regular staff meetings take place so that practitioners know and understand the planning and the manager supports individuals in this area of their work well. This results in good teamwork and strong relationships between the staff. Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The planning is effective so that children experience a varied and interesting curriculum. As a result, they are making good progress within the Foundation Stage curriculum. Practitioners can describe how they differentiate activities for children so they learn at an appropriate pace. Records of children's progress are generally well detailed and clearly link to the stepping-stones for learning. Activities are evaluated and methods for this are becoming increasingly effective. However, the details on individual children's development are not yet used to plan for future learning.

All required records are well documented and the recommended agreements are in place to support children's care. The setting keeps appropriate details on children's individual needs but does not continually ensure confidentiality with regard to children's allergies. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the setting agreed to improve the book area. They also agreed to update the policies for child protection and complaints and make these accessible for parents and to keep a record of all pre-existing injuries observed on children.

A variety of stage appropriate books are set out within the book area, so that children can see them and make their own selections. The seating resources remain limited and for the most part children have to sit on a large mat to look at books. The child protection and complaints policies are up to date and these now contain all required detail. A file containing the setting's policies is available to parents in the hallway. Clear procedures are now in place for recording pre-existing injuries to children thus supporting their well-being.

At the last inspection of nursery education, the setting agreed to: increase practitioners' knowledge of all the areas of children's learning; provide more opportunities for children to write in role play situations; develop children's knowledge of their own and others' cultures; make pencils and paper available within the role play area and provide further opportunities for the children to practise simple calculation, addition and subtraction.

By attending training and by receiving support from their manager, staff have an increased understanding of the 'stepping stones for learning'. This has resulted in staff having a good understanding of what they want children to learn during their activities. Pencils and paper are now continually available within the role play area. Children spontaneously use these resources to develop their play and ideas. For example, they make forms as they act out scenarios in an 'office'. Improvements have been made to resources and planning to develop children's awareness of diversity. Children now undertake a variety of activities to develop their knowledge of the world they live in. They look at food and celebrations from other countries and play an active role in their own community. Children take part in some activities to develop simple calculation, addition and subtraction skills. However, practitioners do not use spontaneous opportunities to reinforce this area of learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

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.

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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):

- make sure details on children's health remain confidential
- ensure all staff are fully aware of the setting's policies and procedures
- review hand washing procedures
- make sure the action plan regarding staff qualifications is met.
- and minimise the risk from poisonous plants in the outdoor play area.

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 procedures for recording children's progress and for evaluating the activities so that this information can be used to plan for future learning
- develop a more pro-active approach to sharing records of children's progress within the Foundation Stage.

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