



Gayton Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306391
Inspection date	29 November 2006
Inspector	Suzette Butcher
Setting Address	Gayton Primary School, Gayton Road, Heswall, Wirral, Merseyside, CH60 8PZ
Telephone number	0151 342 8538
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Registered person	Gayton Pre School Management Committee
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?

Gayton Pre-school was registered in 1991 and it is managed by a parents committee. It operates from a mobile unit in the grounds of Gayton Primary School, in Heswall, Wirral. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11:30 during term time only. A lunch club is available from 11.30 to 12.55 for children who wish to attend after each morning session. 'Rising Three' sessions are held for younger children on a Monday and Wednesday from 12.45 to 15.15. Children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 34 children on roll, of whom 32 receive funding for early education. Children attend from the local area and the setting supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pre-school employs 10 staff, of whom, seven hold appropriate Early Years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health needs are fully protected through good procedures and clear documentation. All areas are well-maintained and cleaned thoroughly on a regular basis to prevent the spread of infection and cross-contamination. Every member of staff is trained in paediatric first aid, to enable them to respond appropriately to minor injuries. Staff are also trained in procedures to support children with specific health needs, to provide care for a wider range of children. Good arrangements are in place to care for children who are ill, and parents are contacted promptly when required. Children learn to accept responsibility for their own health needs and gradually take care of their own personal needs. Practical experiences are organised, such as a visit from the 'life caravan', to demonstrate good hygiene routines and healthy practice. Children learn about cleaning their teeth correctly or why they must wash their hands carefully before eating and after toileting. Staff regularly revisit and reinforce good practice, to ensure that children fully understand their purpose. For example, children confidently look for a tissue to blow their nose and carefully dispose of it in the special blue bin, to prevent the germs spreading. Children are encouraged to develop independence in all their self-help skills, as they put on their coats or shoes and practise dressing skills as they play dressing up games.

Energetic outdoor physical activities help to promote a healthy lifestyle for children when they are organised as an integral part of each day's continuous provision. Children make good progress in their physical development, as they have fun taking turns to join an activity on the play ground, or in the grassy area in small groups throughout the year. They put on wellingtons and warm coats to run up and down a grassy hill, or roll large hoops up and down. Younger children gain confidence and learn to move with control as they pedal bicycles and negotiate obstacles on a track. They enjoy climbing or catching and throwing bean bags as staff gently remind them how fresh air and exercise helps them to stay healthy. Fine motor skills are developed, as children explore different materials and consistencies. They confidently use scissors or skilfully build constructions with wooden blocks. Children help themselves to a wide range of creative and writing materials to create pictures or record information.

Individual dietary requirements are carefully recorded and made available to all staff, to protect children's health needs. Children learn about the benefits of healthy eating in topic work and during informal discussions at lunch or snack time. They enjoy choosing from healthy options, such as grapes, bananas or apples for snacks. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy items in their child's packed lunch. Children patiently wait to enter the café area for their snack, where they confidently pour their own drink of milk or water as they join a small group of their friends at the table. Everyone chats quietly and happily together as they eat and good manners are promoted and warmly praised. Children learn about healthy diets through hands-on experiences when they help to cultivate vegetables in the pre-school garden area. They proudly harvest a large marrow together and taste the cooked end product. Children bring in their own drink each day or confidently ask staff for a drink of water when they are thirsty. Younger children are offered drinks on a regular basis and encouraged to drink more in hot weather.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure in the familiar pre-school setting, where they develop a strong sense of belonging and ownership. Parents, grandparents and carers are warmly welcomed by familiar staff, and invited to examine the latest photographs of children participating in special pre-school activities, on a time-line in the entrance hall. Colourful, tactile displays of children's art work and informative posters create a purposeful play and learning environment, where children move about freely and confidently. Areas are very well organised to provide different opportunities, such as role play, construction or quiet reading. Informative notices remind parents and staff about the learning opportunities in each area, and pictures or written labels help children to find different resources. A wide range of good quality toys are available to meet the needs of children across the age ranges, and equipment is checked on a regular basis to ensure that it is safe and clean. Children eagerly choose their own games and activities from low-level units around the play areas, which helps them to make their own decisions and promotes their independent learning.

A high staff ratio ensures that children are well supervised and protected from harm. Staff are vigilant and carry out daily risk assessments on the indoor and outdoor environment. Hazards and dangers are quickly identified and activities appropriately reviewed. For example, staff decide to use bean bags instead of balls on the wet playground, where numerous sodden leaves present a potential hazard. Children are actively encouraged to consider risks as they learn about what is dangerous and how to keep themselves safe. Visits from the community police and discussions about 'stranger danger' highlight perils in a supportive atmosphere. Role play activities in the road area introduce and reinforce road safety procedures. Staff maximise learning opportunities during everyday activities, to remind children of their agreed code of conduct, because 'bumping into children when running makes others get hurt'. Children learn to consider the possible consequences of their actions when their attention is brought to the 'sharp, pointy ones' or the 'slippy leaves'. Children learn not to be afraid to say no, and to seek comfort and reassurance if they need help, because staff listen to them and respect their choices. Issues such as keeping secrets are discussed sensitively, and children are reminded that sometimes secrets make them feel sad or unhappy. Staff have a full understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children's well-being, and children are protected through comprehensive procedures and documentation. However, the child protection policies and procedures have not been fully reviewed to reflect the changes and contact details of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and relate well to staff and other children. 'Birth to three matters' framework is in place and used effectively, to complement and extend current good practice for younger children in the 'Rising threes' groups. Training is ongoing, to ensure that all staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to implement the framework, and record younger children's progress. Assessment systems are in place to create strong links with the

Foundation Stage and to form a firm basis for planning. This promotes a smooth transition when children move between the different age groups.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and has a significant impact on children's learning. Children make good progress within the Foundation Stage because staff have high expectations and a very clear understanding of the underlying principles of Early Years education. Children are strongly motivated to learn and are inspired by the staff's enthusiasm and commitment. Consequently, children are confident and happily accept an active role in their own learning experiences. Good systems are in place to record children's progress with a starting point established through discussion with the parents of each child. Staff record daily observations on individual children's play and learning, and clearly identify the appropriate next steps in learning for each child, alongside their observation. This information is used to inform future planning, and enables staff to effectively build on what children already know and can do. Comprehensive long, medium and short-term planning is followed and reviewed on a regular basis, to reflect children's interests and identify new learning opportunities. Topics and themes, such as 'Toys' or 'People Who Help Us' provide a focus for exciting activities, which are skilfully interwoven within the planning for continuous provision in the setting. For example, children enjoy listening to a story about Kipper's toy box and subsequently have fun recreating a toy box.

Children eagerly choose and decide where they want to play within a supportive environment, where staff are patient and sensitive to their needs. Staff know children well and the organisation of key worker groups further enhances strong relationships between staff and children. Activities are differentiated and adapted to meet children's individual interests or extended to provide stimulating challenges for more able children. For example, staff introduce dinosaurs or trains into number games, or encourage children to activate their own games on the computer. Systems and areas of continuous provision are well organised to provide a broad range of interesting and stimulating play and learning opportunities. This enables children to practise and consolidate their learning as they have fun with their friends. Children are regularly encouraged to revisit areas of learning to enable staff to reinforce and secure their knowledge and understanding through play activities. Photographs are taken and promptly developed, to share with children and provide memorable images. Children are invited to recall a story or relate a past experience to everyone. There is a very good balance of free-play and adult directed activities available throughout the session, and children are given time to explore and apply their learning. Children are truly interested in what they are doing because staff use different methods to help them become focused, able to resist distractions and persist for some time. This is evident at story times when children are invited to participate and play their own role, as they all join in a mime and pretend to make a cake. Staff skilfully model an activity to help children to acquire new skills and try new experiences, or they discreetly work alongside a group of children to extend their learning. They intervene sensitively and provide explanations to make children think. For example, children create their own imaginative games as they build castles with wooden blocks, and staff skilfully introduce counting, matching and sorting activities into the game.

Children quickly learn to make comparisons and form connections between different areas of learning in an environment which is full of visual images and symbols, such as letters, numbers

and signs. They seek opportunities to use writing and creative materials to make lists, or decide that it is a good idea to move magazines from the home corner to the library. Children confidently initiate and develop their own games and imaginative role play activities, and happily welcome other children who ask to join in. They become absorbed in exciting journeys on a wooden boat or complicated adventures as they pretend to drive a car together. Small groups of children spontaneously initiate and negotiate dramatic role play games and decide who is going to be Father Christmas, Rudolph and the elf. Music forms an integral part of each day, when children experience new sounds, such as African music, and learn to make different rhythms or join in lively action songs. They develop good listening skills and learn to follow instructions when they recognise the musical symbol for stop. Children's creativity is strongly developed and a wide range of sensory opportunities encourage children to gather information through their five senses. Children listen to stories and look at books about snakes, as they consider the S sound and shape. They find out where they live and what they eat. They reflect on descriptive words and language as they compare shapes and textures in two 'feely boxes' and comment that a snake makes a round shape like a snail's shell. They concentrate for long periods when they cut out and choose shiny paper or woollen strands to decorate their own snake.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The inclusive pre-school environment promotes equality of opportunity for every child and creates an atmosphere where children are valued as individuals. Staff are proactive in developing a strong partnership with parents and relevant support agencies. This identifies each child's strengths and weaknesses and provides support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Appropriate individual education plans are implemented and reviewed on a regular basis. Key staff have a clear understanding of code of practice procedures and they attend relevant training to increase their knowledge and experience. Children learn about the wider world in stories, topics and during celebrations of different festivals and cultures. Every child has access to a broad range of resources and play opportunities, which reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. Positive links are fostered with children's own cultures and languages by involving parents and family members in special events and activities. Children are encouraged to consider the needs of others when they learn about children growing up in Africa, where food and water is scarce. This positive approach ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are fostered.

Children enjoy each other's company and play harmoniously together in the friendly atmosphere. They are well-mannered and considerate towards adults and each other, and the strong ethos of mutual respect and support between staff is reflected in the positive interactions amongst the children. Minor disagreements are skilfully dealt with in a way that is appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. Individual children's level of maturity and understanding is acknowledged and respected. For example, staff quickly intervene when children argue over the same toy and quietly and calmly discuss consequences, until peace is restored and children have fully understood. Children's opinions are sought and valued highly when they create a code of conduct for the whole group to follow. They agree and understand why it is good to 'share toys', 'talk, not shout' and 'listen to what teachers say'. They happily gather together

and help each other at tidy-up time. Frequent praise and encouragement helps younger children to develop confidence and positive self-esteem. Individual achievements and kind actions are enthusiastically celebrated with the whole group when, for example, children proudly accept stickers for tidying their toys away without being asked.

The partnership with parents is good. The positive relationships shared between parents and staff promote good continuity of care for children. Information is shared during informal chats each day and key worker systems provide a constant point of contact for parents. Suitable appointments are arranged throughout the term, where parents are invited to a fuller discussion of their child's progress with their key worker, and any concerns are shared. Some parents are offered clear and meaningful tasks to undertake with their child at home, to enable them to actively participate in their child's early education and learning, but this is not consistently applied. Parents and carers are invited to attend open days twice a year and everyone is welcome to take a turn as parent helper in the group. Parents take an active role in the pre-school organisation as committee members, and contribute towards the continual improvement programme. A welcome booklet, newsletters and notice boards keep parents informed of special events and topics. Parents' opinions are valued when they are consulted in questionnaires. Parents comment on their complete satisfaction with the quality of care and education provided, and praise the staff team very highly.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Management's clear vision and high standards successfully steer the work of the setting. They demonstrate a strong commitment towards the continual improvement of the quality of care and education that they provide. Evaluation systems are in place to regularly review and clearly identify the setting's strengths and weaknesses, and action plans are agreed with realistic target dates and goals. This enables management to prioritise areas for improvement and development. Regular staff meetings are held to review and plan the education programme, and to identify children's progress over time. This enables management to effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision for nursery education. Staff attend cluster meetings with other Early Years staff in their area to share information and ideas.

Robust recruitment and employment procedures are in place, to ensure that new members of staff are carefully vetted and suitable to work with children. Management monitor the continuing suitability of staff as they work alongside them. They take a very active role within the pre-school, where they lead by example and share their good practice. Staff regularly complete self-evaluation programmes, which enables them to gain confidence as they learn to critically analyse aspects of their teaching and assess the quality of learning they provide for children. This creates an effective programme for improvement and identifies future training needs. Staff are well-qualified and they continue to attend relevant training to increase their knowledge and enhance their skills. The consistent and strong staff team have worked together for a number of years and have a very clear

understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities. The pre-school is organised imaginatively with areas clearly designated for different learning activities. Staff use resources

flexibly and creatively, both indoors and outside. Strong links are maintained with the adjacent primary school and monthly meetings are organised with the reception class teacher. Pre-school children join in concerts and special school events on a regular basis.

Documentation and policies relating to the continuity and care of children are in place. Confidentiality is maintained and every document is reviewed annually or as required. Daily registration documents record general times of arrival and departures for children and staff. However, accurate times are not consistently recorded which compromises children's safety. Policies and procedures are available for parents and staff at all times.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the providers agreed to ensure that all portable appliances conform to safety requirements. They also agreed that at least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate is on the premises at all times. All appliances are now checked on an annual basis and every member of staff holds a current first aid qualification, to further safeguard children in the setting.

There were two recommendations made at the last inspection for nursery education. Subsequently, the providers have increased opportunities for children to move freely between activities, during outdoor play to improve the quality of Early Years education. Systems have been introduced to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, to continually improve the overall quality of Early Years education.

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):

- review child protection policies and procedures to include details of the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- review the system for registration to ensure accurate times and arrivals are recorded for staff and 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):

- increase opportunities to actively involve parents and carers in their child's learning.

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