



2J's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY333822
Inspection date	19 October 2006
Inspector	Virginia Cooper
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Registered person	2J's Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

2J's Pre-School opened in 2006. It operates from one main room and a lobby in a community centre, in Rochester. The setting serves the local area. A maximum of 32 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.00 for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 73 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

The pre-school employs 12 members of staff, eight of these hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a warm, caring environment helping them feel emotionally secure. They are nurtured until they feel confident and secure about leaving their main carers. If they are not ready emotionally to be left staff suggest parents delay and work with them on a program that helps them settle.

Children enjoy a clean and well-ordered environment. Staff accompany children to the toilet area for security reasons but encourages them to independently use the toilet; staff provide a step to help them reach and a smaller seat to help children feel secure. A pictorial hand washing sequence helps children remember to wash their hands after using the toilet. There is foamy soap and paper towels to help prevent the spread of infection. A child who wets themselves is dealt with discreetly and sensitively to ensure their self esteem is not damaged. Staff clean the floor promptly and with the minimum of fuss to prevent cross infection.

Children learn about good hygiene practice through the daily routine; there are three mobile sinks in the main room for hand washing. One is for washing hands before and after eating, the second for after art and craft activities and the third for before and after using the water tray. Children understand which sink to use and receive simple explanations they can understand about germs spreading to explain the importance of good hand washing procedures. Staff are aware of good hygiene practice and the importance of sound personal care to reduce cross infection; for example, they use gloves and clean the changing mat with anti-bacterial spray after each nappy change.

Staff have good procedures in place about the administration of medication to ensure parents are well informed and children are not given anything that is unsuitable. The provision has written policies that make it clear to parents that they do not care for children who are contagious ensuring other children are not at risk of cross-infection. Children who become poorly whilst attending the group are comforted and made comfortable until their parents are able to collect them.

There are two staff members who hold a current first aid qualification; one of these is always present to administer first aid to children in the event of an accident or emergency. The owners are looking for appropriate courses for other members of staff to update their first aid qualifications. There is a first aid kit that is well stocked but some of the bandages are past the best before date. The system in place to check the kit regularly is not working. Staff record any accidents and any first aid that is administered whilst the children are in their care. This results in parents being well informed about what has happened to their child.

Children who stay all day use a small secure area outside to get some fresh air at lunch time. Children use this outside area for a few activities, but generally regular outdoor play is not included in the plans. They do on occasions, however, visit the local park giving children access to other physical play equipment.

Staff store packed lunches appropriately in a cool area and are purchasing their own fridge to improve the storage facilities to prevent cross contamination. The pre-school provides snacks; it is usual to have toast and crumpets mid morning and the more healthy option of fruit in the afternoon. Posters in the pre-school inform children that fruit is good for them but this option is rarely provided for the children who only attend the morning sessions. Food preparation is hygienic and steps are taken to prevent cross infection. Staff undertake some tasks that children can easily manage alone, for example, they serve the snacks to children and pour their drinks, and this does not encourage children's growing independence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is secure from the outside; visitors are only able to enter when the caretaker opens the door to them. Children understand the rules in place to keep them safe, for example, they do not leave the main room or visit the toilets without adult supervision. It is possible, however, for a determined child to leave the main room and reach the main entrance unsupervised. Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedure so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely.

Children enjoy a range of resources that staff check regularly for their safety and suitability. Large physical equipment is used safely, it stands on safety mats, and children take turns and are always supervised by a staff member. Staff mop up water spillages promptly to prevent children slipping on wet floors. The equipment includes natural materials like shells, pine cones, pebbles and conkers providing children with plenty of opportunities to examine real objects. There are a sufficient number of child-sized chairs and tables to allow children to manage tasks more easily and eat in groups.

A thorough risk assessment and daily visual checks are undertaken by two of the owners to ensure that these standards are maintained to provide children with a safe environment for play.

Overall responsibility for child protection is taken by two of the owners; they update their knowledge by attending courses and cascade information to the rest of the staff to ensure consistency. The child protection policy includes all the required information to enable staff to protect children. The policy is available to all parents making them aware of the nursery's responsibilities. This contributes to a safe outcome for children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The environment is prepared before children attend in accordance with the plans enabling them to play as soon as they arrive. Children play happily and relate well to one another and the staff. Much of the session is free play, whilst most children are engaged; a few require more adult support. The home corner is popular with children. They use their imaginations playing house and shops, staff play with them and become involved in their games. Children use real coins when playing shops and real stamps when playing post offices giving their play authenticity.

A creative activity is provided each day and there is always a good selection of small world toys for children to use where they act out and explore in depth familiar experiences extending their understanding. Circle time and physical play are usually large group activities and a few children find this difficult, they become disinterested and drop out because their attention span is limited. On the second day of the inspection staff grouped children more appropriately for story time and this was more successful. The staff are beginning to use the Birth to three matters framework to plan activities for the youngest children. They have access to a range of natural materials like shells, pebbles and pine cones that they love to examine with magnifying glasses. Children recognise and discuss similarities, for instance, a child expressed that a shell had spikes and looks like a dinosaur's back. Most children join in singing activities with enthusiasm and enjoy songs with accompanying actions. Staff notice when children are kind and praise their behaviour promoting their self-esteem.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff know about the six areas of learning within the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and plan activities to cover all areas; however, their level of familiarity with the stepping stones is variable. The balance between child initiated and adult assisted activities is heavily weighted towards the children making the majority of choices about their learning. Unfortunately, staff do not record much of what children learn whilst they undertake free play activities. Staff undertake planned observations, but are still learning how to record children's progress regularly and use assessment records effectively to influence future plans. Children's next steps are identified but often from information staff hold about children in their memory rather than from their assessment records. Therefore, appropriate challenges and the areas to explore next are not always identified in a formal or consistent way. This is an area of teaching that requires further development. Staff understand that some children require more support to learn and keep focused; they work hard with such children and give them the additional help they need, praising them when they do well to encourage them to develop a love of learning. Activities are specifically provided to address children's individual learning needs if they have difficulties with something. However, plans rarely consider how an activity can be delivered in more depth for the most able children although some staff make adjustments naturally.

Most children are confident and undertake their play with enthusiasm. They play co-operatively with one another, share well and take turns easily. Most children independently manage the toilet but they are accompanied by a member of staff for security reasons. They behave well and show consideration for one another. They respond positively to praise and encouragement which is helping them learn what is right and wrong and staff use stories to illustrate appropriate behaviour. Staff undertake some activities that children can easily manage alone, for example, serving their snack and pouring their drinks which is not developing their independence. They celebrate different festivals helping them understand that people hold differing beliefs.

Children interact well and negotiate with others confidently. They use speech to explore real and imagined experiences; for example, a group of children playing with the dolls house pretended that the family are tired and all need a sleep. Children discuss the sounds letters make and some can think of other words that begin with the same letter. Children are developing a love of books for pleasure and to locate information and visit the reading area independently.

They thoroughly enjoy staff reading to them. They join in familiar stories and hold interesting conversations with staff about the different characters. This introduces new vocabulary and knowledge, for example, children show interest after one story in what a scientist does. Mark making opportunities are available every day in various forms; there is a mark making table, creative activities like painting, writing equipment in the role play areas and children 'write' their names on their pictures. Some children write recognisable letters and a few can write their name in full. Consequently, they are learning that writing carries meaning and is useful. Children find their names at snack time every day to help them become familiar with how their name is written.

Staff spontaneously introduce children to some elements of mathematics as they play. Children learn about space, shape and measure as they fill containers with water, play with construction toys and cook. Some staff count with children as they play but the opportunities to do this are inconsistent. There is no number line in the pre-school to help children become familiar with written numbers. Children can recognise patterns; a child made lines in the play dough with pebbles and a group of children use rollers and sponges co-operatively to make patterns as they paint. Most children know their colours because staff automatically refer to them as children play. The opportunities to make simple calculations are very limited.

Children are curious and like to investigate objects with a magnifying glass. They have opportunities to look at natural materials and explore similarities and differences. They make reference to the texture of materials and know if something is smooth or rough. They experiment to find out how things work and their discovery is encouraged by staff asking open ended questions. Two children are thrilled when they discover they can alter the speed of the water wheel by pouring gently or with force. Children have access to a wide range of construction toys to help their design and making skills. They do not, however, have many opportunities to self select the tools and materials they require to make and complete a project of their own choice. Staff usually provide everything needed depriving children of opportunities to develop their decision making skills. They learn about nature by planting bulbs and watching them grow and examining worms and bugs in the soil. The pre-school has a computer but this was not working on the day of the inspection; there are few other resources for them to learn about everyday technology. Children are beginning to know about the beliefs and festivals of other cultures. They pay close attention to a story about how Diwali is celebrated and can explain competently what customs are traditional.

Children's physical development is fostered well. They move confidently with control and co-ordination. They understand the rule not to run inside is to protect them and keep them safe. They queue sensibly when using the slide and take turns showing an awareness of space, of themselves and of others. There are posters about eating foods that are good for them that are discussed, encouraging them to develop an awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet. Children who stay to lunch are taken out for some fresh air at midday allowing them some time to be physically active. They are reminded to rest if they have been running and become hot and bothered. Children use hoops to jump in and out of and enjoy kicking balls into a pop up goal mouth introducing them to sport. Children use hand held tools competently; they can use scissors and cut around quite complicated shapes demonstrating a good level of control. They use brushes, rollers and sponges when they paint and cutters, rolling pins and plastic scissors when they shape and mould malleable materials.

Children's creative development is particularly well fostered. Children are encouraged to be imaginative because staff join in and become involved in their role play. Both boys and girls dress up regularly, the home corner is well used and the children become absorbed in their play in this area. Children work collaboratively painting a large picture using rollers and sponges, they experiment to make different patterns, notice they can achieve different textures with the paint and gain a great sense of achievement when they mix colours successfully. Their artwork is individually styled and they are not inhibited whilst they are creating. They love to experiment with different musical instruments and are beginning to appreciate tone, rhythm and pitch. They all sing along enthusiastically.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff greet children and parents on their arrival; parents initially register the children, and they come in happily and settle quickly. This method of welcoming the children allows family members and staff to share information easily each day about anything that might influence the children's care. Children are valued and respected as individuals, differences are embraced and every child is treated with equal concern. The mix of children is diverse; they celebrate a variety of festivals to ensure all children feel valued. The children enjoy a routine that is consistent and organised, helping them feel secure; they enjoy opportunities to be active and relax throughout the day. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with special needs are welcome and integrated into the pre-school. They have an individual education plan that sets realistic targets to help them develop. The staff work with other professionals to ensure children with special needs receive an appropriate service after full consultation with parents.

Staff manage children's behaviour positively, their age, stage of development and level of understanding are all taken into account. They are well behaved and respond positively to the praise and encouragement they are given. The boundaries are consistently applied, for example, children understand that they take turns nicely to use the slide. Staff periodically remind children of the rules and children demonstrate that they know what is expected of them and clearly understand the difference between right and wrong.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive good quality information about the setting and its provision. There is a parents' notice board, regular newsletters and information explaining how they can complain. One parent says staff help her child develop in all areas. She believes the new owners are making positive changes; she is pleased with the service provided. The policies and procedures are always available for parents to read. They exchange information verbally at drop off and collection times. Parents are encouraged to share information about their children when they start at pre-school, but other than informal chats, have few opportunities to discuss their child's assessment records. These records are not always kept on the premises when staff are updating them. This means that the records are not totally accessible to parents at all times. Parents are welcome to stay with their children and to visit the pre-school at any time but they rarely take this opportunity to become actively involved with their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The owners have made good progress since registration introducing procedures for the safe operation of the provision that promotes children's welfare. A staffing and employment policy ensures staff are suitable to care for children. They evaluate the service they provide and are aware which areas are strong and which need further development. The daily routine is organised and includes quiet times, active times and times for children to eat and drink. Children are able to move freely and safely in the main hall of the pre-school. A key worker system is established to ensure appropriate care; however, although children are engaged most of the time a few children drop out whilst undertaking large group activities because they are too long for them. All mandatory documentation is in place. Staff appreciate and understand the importance of confidentiality. The policies and procedures are detailed but not particularly personalised to this group. They are slightly inaccurate in places not always reflecting this group's practice. The owner is aware of this and reviewing them.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The owners are very positive and have a clear vision for the pre-school. Since taking over they have examined in detail the effectiveness of the pre-school's delivery of the curriculum for nursery education. They support the staff to enable them to understand their roles and responsibilities and have made changes to the way assessment records are kept and used. An appraisal system is being introduced that identifies training needs and staff are encouraged to undertake additional training as available. The owners evaluate their progress and identify areas that require development, for example, ensuring all staff have their own copies of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. The owners take the major responsibility for planning activities for the educational program but they are encouraging staff to take a more active part in the process as their confidence grows. The staff work well as a team; they respect the owners and accept their guidance willingly. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure a system is in place to restock the first aid kit when the contents reach the best before date and replace anything that is used regularly
- give further consideration to the security of the premises, ensure the precautions taken to prevent children leaving the premises alone are adequate
- consider how appropriate some of the large group activities are for some children whose attention span is limited

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):

- improve staff knowledge of the stepping stones to help them record more of what children learn whilst undertaking free play. Develop staff skills to use assessment records effectively to identify gaps in children's learning and use this information to influence future plans to address children's individual learning needs and provide appropriate challenge for more able children.
- improve the opportunities for all children to count more regularly and for those children who are capable, introduce more opportunities for them to begin making simple calculations
- provide more opportunities for children to self select the tools and materials they require to make and complete a project of their own choice
- improve your partnership with parents by ensuring children's records are always on the premises and available for parents to see; consider how parents can contribute more regularly to their child's records

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