



Regents Park Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131554
Inspection date	25 January 2007
Inspector	Marilyn Joy
Setting Address	Tanners Brook Middle School, Elmes Drive, Regents Park, Southampton, Hampshire, SO15 4PH
Telephone number	023 8070 3571
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Registered person	Regents Park 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Regents Park Community Pre-School opened since 1989 and is managed by a committee of parents. It operates from two inter-connected play rooms, with one forming the main play area. There is an enclosed outdoor area. The pre-school is situated in the grounds of Tanners Brook Schools in the residential area of Regents Park. It serves the local and surrounding residential areas.

There are currently 58 children from two years to five years on roll, of these 42 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language. The pre-school operates Monday to Friday 09:05 - 11:35 and 12:30 and 15:00 during the school term.

There are currently eight staff who work with the children. There are seven with relevant early years qualifications and two who are working towards initial or further qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and has established strong links with the schools in which it is based.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well because staff observe clear health and hygiene procedures and encourage children to develop an understanding for themselves. They ensure children carefully wash their hands prior to eating their snack and are proactive in reminding children, either verbally or through visual prompts displayed in the cloakroom, to wash their hands after using toilet independently. Thorough routines are followed to ensure all resources and equipment are clean. Procedures are sensitively followed if assisting with children's personal care. Positive steps are taken to prevent cross-infection. Procedures are in place so that children do not attend if they are ill. Tissues are available and assistance given when necessary so that children learn to use and dispose of tissues when blowing their noses.

Children sit in sociable groups with staff and enjoy varied healthy and nutritious snacks of fresh fruit, milk or water. Independence is encouraged as they help themselves and pour their own drinks. Health and dietary requirements are recorded on children's registration forms and good systems are in place to ensure activities, such as cooking and snacks, comply with individual requirements and parent's wishes.

The pre-school has an ongoing training programme to ensure staff hold current first aid certificates so they have up-to-date knowledge should this be required in the event of a child having an accident. There is a well-stocked first aid box and all documentation relating to accidents and medication is in place and maintained accurately.

Children have ample opportunities to develop their physical skills in using a good range of resources. Outdoor play is offered daily unless it is raining, when use is made of the additional playroom for physical activities. Most equipment is rotated effectively to ensure all children can access, although as the climbing apparatus is usually set up in the additional playroom it is used less frequently. Children wrap up warmly and enjoy the fresh air. They skilfully ride and manoeuvre wheeled toys around and practise throwing and catching. They concentrate and are shown how to manage tools in both hands, for example, when filling funnels and tubes with rice. Children use a variety of tools and small equipment to encourage hand-eye coordination and pre-writing skills. They move confidently around the pre-school, developing spatial awareness as they sit on the mat for circle time or fit the dolls and furniture in the house.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

A welcoming environment is offered where children can move around freely and be easily supervised. Resources and activities are prepared for children's arrival so that staff are able to

greet parents and children, and help them to settle well. Attractive posters and displays decorate the walls. Children have access to a wide range of resources that are clean and in good condition.

Children are protected from harm because they are supervised at all times. Staff have attended training in child protection and are aware of procedures to be followed should they have concerns about a child. However, the child protection statement has not been updated to reflect current guidance or include clear details of the action to be taken should an allegation be made against a member of staff.

Effective risk assessments are conducted to ensure children are safe. Particular care is taken when changes are made to the premises and during building work to reassess potential hazards on a daily basis and minimise risks. Good security systems ensure children cannot leave the premises unaccompanied. Evacuation procedures are practised so that children and staff know what to do in the event of a fire.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enthusiastically arrive at pre-school and benefit from the positive relationships developed with staff. A range of activities is organised and there is an effective system for rotating most resources to ensure variety each day. Staff work well together to support children as they move between activities indoors and outdoors. Children are busy and enjoy their time at the pre-school. Staff value what children do by displaying their pictures on the wall and offering praise and encouragement, consequently children are proud and want to share their successes.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. A carefully planned curriculum, linked to the Foundation Stage, offers children activities in all areas of learning. Clear information is included for focus activities to provide staff with guidance on the language and learning to be promoted. However, full advantage is not taken during these planned activities to monitor and record children's achievements. Observations clearly record what children can do and are completed at various times during the session, although, there are insufficient to enable staff to accurately reflect children's achievements in their records which results in children's next steps for learning being difficult to identify.

Children's social skills are developing well as they learn to play co-operatively together. Staff are involved in activities and encourage them to share and be kind to each other. Children gain competence in their personal care as they put coats on to go outside and get ready for snack time. They are motivated, interested and enjoy their play. Activities are introduced at circle time and children eagerly choose what they want to do from those set out. Self-selection trolleys are available, although, children are not sufficiently confident or inspired by the contents to use them independently. Children enjoy making play dough which engages and sustains their interest as once made they continue to mould and shape it.

Many children communicate confidently, engaging in conversations with staff and their peers. Mark-making is a popular activity with children using chalks on the walls outside or painting and drawing indoors. Writing for a purpose is sometimes encouraged when children add themselves to the list for bubble painting or sign in for Club 4. Many are beginning to recognise their name at snack time and some can form recognisable letters when attempting to write their name. Text is displayed around the room to encourage awareness that print carries meaning. Children concentrate and listen attentively to stories because they are very well read by staff. Children sometimes choose books for themselves, although, the book area is limited. They are encouraged to handle books carefully.

Mathematical language and concepts are introduced into many activities. Children decide where to park their cars or bikes outside by matching the number on the bike with the number on the wall. Specific mathematical games and activities encourage number, matching and sorting, although, some opportunities are missed at circle time to reinforce counting and problem solving. Positional language is introduced well as they decide where and how to fit the dolls and the furniture into the house. Children begin to identify shapes at the craft table and explore how they fit together when making puzzles.

A variety of festivals and celebrations are incorporated into activities throughout the year to encourage children's awareness of the world around them. Weekly cooking introduces different foods and opportunities for children to observe how things change. They have daily access to the computer, although, there is not always enough support to enable those interested to follow a simple programme. Exciting media and materials encourage them to explore and experiment. They use funnels to fill tubes and watch rice sprinkle out, make roadways with compost and construct models from clay, boxes and construction kits. They explore different textures and attempt to describe how they feel. They try bubble painting then extend their designs with glitter and buttons.

Children use their imaginations when playing in the role-play area and staff often join in conversations and extend the play, although, additional resources are not always available for children to achieve this independently. Children enjoy music and singing. They excitedly join in with action rhymes and become absorbed in remembering what comes next when miming to familiar songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children demonstrate a clear sense of belonging in the happy and confident manner in which they arrive at the pre-school. Time is spent prior to children attending the pre-school to gather information that will assist staff in meeting their individual needs. Ongoing discussions ensure this exchange of information continues. Parents value the positive and open relationships with they have developed with staff. Close liaison between the pre-school, parents and other professionals means children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support to help them participate in the group.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children play harmoniously together and understand the expectations of the pre-school. They know the signal for tidying

up and most willingly help. They sit quietly and listen attentively at circle time. They form friendly relationships with others and play co-operatively together, learning to take turns and share as they play. Staff help them to divide the rice fairly and wait their turn when playing games. A variety of resources and activities encourage children's awareness of the wider society. Festivals and celebrations are included within the curriculum and parents are encouraged to be involved and share their customs.

An informative welcome pack and a prospectus provides parents with details of the daily operation of the pre-school and informs them of the range of policies and procedures in place. However, the complaints policy received by parents is not up-to-date which means they are not aware of the current regulations should they have concerns they want to raise.

Partnership with parents is good in respect of the provision of nursery education. Parents are provided with comprehensive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the areas of learning. Staff spend time explaining the curriculum and the records they keep which parents are then invited termly to view and comment on. Half-termly newsletters include clear details of forthcoming topics and focus activities. They receive very good suggestions on how parents can contribute to children's learning at home and the purpose of activities. Children participate in a book sharing scheme and regularly take 'Sam the bear' home so they can practice dressing and undressing him. They talk about what they have been doing with him when they return him to pre-school. Parents entries in the diary are valued and read out at circle time.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are comfortable and at ease in the happy and relaxed atmosphere provided by staff. The high ratio of staff on most days contributes well to children's health, safety and wellbeing. Policies and procedures cover all aspects of the daily operation of the pre-school, however, they are not reviewed frequently enough or when regulations change to ensure they remain up-to-date. Changes to the complaints and child protection policies are prepared but have not been updated, which means parents are not provided with correct information and it may compromise children's care if inappropriate action is taken.

Clear recruitment procedures are in place. Checks are conducted to ensure staff are suitable to work with children, however the documentation to support this is not sufficiently organised. Induction procedures are in place, although, they are not always thoroughly completed to ensure all new staff are aware of the policies and procedures for managing children's health, safety and care. Documentation relating to children's individual needs and wellbeing is well-organised and up-to-date.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. An established and carefully planned curriculum provides the foundation for nursery education. Regular staff meetings are used to discuss practice issues and attending local support networks helps identify areas for development. However, systems for monitoring and evaluation are not always effective which means areas for improvement are not addressed, for example, the system for recording children's progress and planning individual progression. Children benefit from staff commitment towards developing

their skills through further training, their dedication and enthusiasm. The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to review and improve documentation. Information for parents has been updated with a welcome pack and prospectus which between them detail most aspects of the provision. Procedures for responding to emergency situations, such as a fire or a lost child have also been updated. The complaints procedures was updated at the time and is currently being reviewed to update according to current guidance.

The pre-school was asked to review and improve hygiene procedures and facilities to promote good health and minimise the spread of infection. The pre-school introduced a free-stand sink situated in the playroom which has enabled hand washing to be completed more efficiently at snack time. Effective health and hygiene procedures are implemented by all staff and children are encouraged to develop good routines for themselves.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to ensure children's assessments are used to plan for the next stage in their learning and sufficient challenges are provided for more able children. Older children attend Club 4 which focuses on offering more challenging activities. However, children's progress records are not up-to-date and have gaps in several aspects for learning which means staff are unable to use them effectively to identify and plan their next steps for learning.

The pre-school was asked to evaluate and improve the use of space and the accessibility of resources to enable children to independently access the full range of equipment. The daily layout allows children to move around and select activities freely from those set out. There is a clear system for the rotation of most resources to ensure all children, whatever day they attend, can access them. However, there are less opportunities to access apparatus for climbing and sliding or free selection of additional craft materials.

An increase in opportunities for children to practise and develop their mathematical understanding and independently access a range of mathematical equipment was recommended. Mathematical concepts are generally incorporated into practical situations, such as, identifying shapes during craft activities or at song time. Specific maths activities are set out and a maths trolley is available most days for children to choose from.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

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 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 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):

- improve employment procedures to ensure clear records are maintained to evidence staff suitability and induction procedures are completed for new staff
- update the complaints policy and documentation to reflect changes in current regulations
- ensure the child protection statement is updated to reflect current guidance and include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer.

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):

- implement a system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision, its policies and procedures, to ensure areas for improvement are identified and addressed
- ensure children's progress records reflect what they can do and are used to plan for their next steps for learning
- increase opportunities for children to practise skills for climbing and sliding; self-selection of resources to enhance independence and free expression, and encourage independent use of the book corner.

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