



## Skylark Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109792
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 January 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Michelle Ann Parham
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<b>Registered person</b>	Naval Under Fives
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Skylark Pre-school is situated in Rowner, Gosport and is one of the child care services operated by the Naval Under Fives organisation. It has been registered since approximately 1994 and serves children and families of Service personnel plus children from the local community. The accommodation consists of three rooms which are used for the various activities provided. The pre-school have access to a fully secure outdoor play area.

The pre-school have arrangements in place to support children who have special educational needs or who may have English as an additional language. There are currently 17 children attending who are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Sessional care is provided from Monday to Friday during term time only, from 09:10 - 11:40 and 12:10 - 14:40. The pre-school is registered to provide care for 18 children from two to five years; however it is the pre-school's

policy to accept children once they reach the age of two years and nine months. Currently 19 children in total attend the setting over the weekly period.

There are currently four practitioners employed to work with the children on a full and part time basis. All practitioners hold relevant child care qualifications. The pre-school receive support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a good understanding of personal hygiene and are becoming increasingly independent in their self-care skills. Topics such as being healthy help children learn the benefits of exercise, importance of a healthy diet, good personal hygiene and of having a clean environment. Children know to put on their coats to keep warm for outside play, persevering at personal care tasks such as putting on their own shoes gaining increasing control in doing so. Practitioners provide soap dispensers, a hand dryer and a small step in the toileting area to encourage good hygiene and independence. Children benefit from a clean environment throughout the setting which is well maintained by practitioners. Table tops and toileting accidents are effectively dealt with using anti bacterial fluids and disposable gloves. All resources are well maintained and checked as they are used for cleanliness and safety. Good procedures are in place for dealing with accidents and emergencies, and three of the four practitioners have a relevant first aid qualification. The first aid box is easily accessible and well maintained. As a result accidents and illness are dealt with effectively and efficiently.

Children benefit from having a safe, enclosed outside play area to the rear of the property. They enjoy use of the play apparatus and are developing co-ordination and balance as they climb up the slide, bounce on the trampett or kick and throw balls. However the outside play area is not used regularly which would ensure children have good access to fresh air and exercise and further promote being healthy, whilst also allowing them to learn about and experience various weather conditions. Children actively engage in action songs and rhymes and show delight and enjoyment when doing so, particularly when pretending they are sleeping bunnies or that they have a hairy spider under their bed. They negotiate their way well, stepping over play resources on the carpeted areas and around the equipment in the setting. They have a good sense of space and awareness of others as they sit on individual cushions for group time and are developing increasing control over their movements. Children handle tools and equipment well and have good hand-eye co-ordination as they, for example, piece together train sets on the carpeted area or work with cube and pegboards.

Children enjoy an excellent selection of nutritious snacks at the setting such as cheese on toast, ham crackers and French toast with chicken roll. These savouries are served with a complementary selection of fresh fruit and fresh milk or water. General discussion and themed topics help children develop a good understanding of foods that are good for them and promote healthy eating. Fresh water is available for children to access throughout the session from water bottles stored in the hallway. Children are familiar with the routine and happy to access their drinks whenever they want to. Effective systems are in place to identify children's particular

health and dietary requirements and practitioners work well as a team to ensure individual needs are addressed. Consequently children are well nourished at the setting.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a safe, secure environment because practitioners have identified and minimised all risks and hazards. For example, stair gates are used in appropriate places and sockets inaccessible. Effective procedures are in place to prevent visitors accessing the provision unannounced as safety chains are used on the front and rear doors of the property; and appropriate systems are in place for the collection of children. For example, arrangements are agreed beforehand with parents on the registration form and if required, passwords are used for other persons who are picking up children.

Informal risk assessments are undertaken, however there are currently no formal written risk assessments or daily checklist to ensure hazards are identified early and addressed. Effective deployment of practitioners contributes to good levels of supervision for children, and ratios are maintained to a high standard which promotes children's safety. Children remain safe in the setting as furniture and equipment are appropriate for the ages and stages of children. As a result they are suitable for use and do not present a safety hazard. Fire evacuation is practised, however, improvement is required in how often this occurs to ensure children and practitioners are confident in the routine and efficient in the event of an emergency.

Children are protected because practitioners have good awareness of the different types of abuse and possible signs and symptoms that may indicate that a child was at risk. Most practitioners have attended additional child protection training, they are aware of their role and responsibility to safeguard children, recording existing injuries children arrive with and incidents, and of the agency to contact with concerns. However improvement is required in regard to how existing injury information is filed to ensure concerns are easily identified and children's welfare maintained.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children receive individual time and attention and develop warm, trusting relationships with practitioners, often enjoying a cuddle which they happily instigate. Younger, less confident and children with additional needs are effectively supported to ensure they are fully included into the group. The setting also has a new practitioner who has sound understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and is able to share her knowledge to develop practice to effectively support the younger children attending. Interaction is generally good and practitioners know the children well and address care needs effectively. The children have access to a good range of resources which they can self-select for their own free play, thus promoting independence and choice. Children benefit and extend their learning through play and natural performance because practitioners plan and provide a range of appropriate activities and resources which are fun, interesting and offer sufficient challenge.

## Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The setting has systems in place to ensure suitable delivery of the curriculum. Most practitioners have sound knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and Foundation Stage for children's learning. Currently the supervisor plans the curriculum with minimal input for the team members, consequently children's individual progress records do not inform future planning for their next steps in learning. However current review of work practice has highlighted the need to allocate additional key worker time to enable assessment records to be completed regularly and therefore enable all team members to plan for children's individual next steps. Planning does include how activities can be adapted to suit children of varying abilities thus ensuring all children have sufficient challenge, however not all focus activities are consistently evaluated for success and improvement. Practitioner's interaction with the children is good as they give time for individual children to contribute and they effectively question to promote independent thinking and extend learning. As a result children are making satisfactory progress in their learning.

The children have access to mark making resources in the messy room though currently not in any other areas of the setting which does not promote emergent writing skills in children's free or imaginative play. Children have good opportunity to access books; they enjoy looking at the pictures and handle them effectively. Posters, labelling and story time promote literacy and children have good opportunity to recognise their own name as they self register at group time. Plans are in progress to establish a book lending scheme at the setting which would further foster children's interest and enjoyment of reading. Children's spoken language is developing very well as they confidently talk about family members, events and home life. They are very happy to interact with their peers and practitioners in free play or at group time, occasionally needing to be reminded to listen for a few moments while someone else is talking as they are so excited to share their news. Most of the children have good levels of concentration as they persevere with activities or listen to instruction and group discussions.

The children have good opportunities to recognise shape, measurement and number. Daily routines and planned activities encourage mathematical learning in all areas and the children are developing skills in calculation and problem solving, gaining increased understanding of addition and subtraction. Practitioners use positional language well to help children's understanding and the treasure hunt programme is a good way to encourage children's participation of which they gain a sense of achievement and pride on completion.

Children have sufficient resources and activities to promote knowledge and understanding of the world such as learning the days of the week and discussing what is happening in their environment. They undertake topics such as mini beasts which extend their knowledge of living creatures and access the computer, developing their technology skills and problem solving. Children are developing a sense of time and place as they adapt well to the routines of the day and learn about past, present and future. They celebrate events and festivals such as Hanukah and Diwali and enjoy practical activities such as making clay lamps which help increase their understanding of other beliefs and cultures.

Children enjoy creativity in role play as they use their imagination when feeding a dolly or serving the play food to their peers or practitioners. They have opportunity to dress up in outfits

and participate in music and movement using instruments. They particularly enjoy doing action songs, which they join in with delight and enthusiasm. Children work with various materials to design and create such as play dough, paints, clay, junk and collage and develop manipulative skills using various tools such as scissors, paint brushes, stencils, rollers and glue sticks.

Practitioners work directly with the children for the majority of the time. Their rapport and relationships with children are good which helps to ensure children are comfortable, happy and relaxed in the setting. Overall, interaction is good and children benefit from a happy, stimulating, fun environment.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop a good sense of themselves because practitioners provide an environment of inclusion and where they are welcomed and thoroughly encouraged to participate in all activities. They display a good sense of belonging evidenced by how they settle easily into the group on arrival and interact extremely well with practitioners and peers. Children enjoy attending the setting and develop confidence in their own abilities as practitioners offer a wealth of praise and encouragement for effort and achievement. Children are valued as individuals because practitioners have a good understanding of equal opportunities and awareness that some children have special requirements. They are gaining increased understanding of diversity through positive images in resources and discussion and practical activities planned around a range of special events and festivals. As a result children develop an understanding of the wider world and respect for other members of society.

Children's behaviour is generally good and they respond well to reminders and gentle intervention from practitioners to share or take turns, gaining an increased understanding of acceptable behaviour. Challenging behaviour is addressed extremely well in accordance with the child's abilities and level of understanding. Positive techniques are used such as discussion, distraction, good behaviour charts, short focused activities and in occasional circumstances time out to think and consider events. Children show consideration for others during group play and love the opportunity for having responsibility or a special job, showing delight when carrying out a task. They learn acceptable behaviour because practitioners are good role models as they encourage good manners, sharing, taking turns and above all practice good communication with children. Practitioners inform parents about how they manage children's behaviour and any concerns are discussed with parents to ensure they are fully up to date and can be addressed effectively. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from satisfactory partnership with parents. Key worker systems operate and practitioners are happy to talk to parents on request. Parents are greeted personally at the door of the setting as they arrive or collect their children. They are sufficiently informed about the pre-school aims, routines and activities provided by means of regular newsletters, prospectus and notice boards. They have a positive view of the pre-school and feel happy with the service they and their children receive. Currently procedures to update parents about children's learning are basic. However the new supervisor is exploring other means such as open mornings and child development profiles which will increase parents' knowledge and understanding of the

foundation stage of children's learning and of the progress their children are making. A complaints log is in place and available to view on request and certificates and policies are displayed for parents' information.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. All practitioners are appropriately qualified, having National Vocational Qualifications in child care and early years which ensure children are provided with quality childcare and practitioners who have a good understanding of child development. A recent management change now provides clear direction as all procedures and working practices are being reviewed for success and improvement. However evaluations on focus activities are not always consistently completed which does not ensure that they have worked successfully. The team work well together which promotes a nice environment and has a positive impact on the children. The supervisor of the setting is working closely with the team members to ensure the curriculum and early learning goals are incorporated into daily routines and activities and that the majority of children's learning occurs through free play and natural performance. Improvement is still required to ensure planning of the curriculum is a team effort and that children's assessments inform planning for their next steps in learning. This will then have a positive impact on all children attending and on how children make better progress on their individual development and learning. The Naval Under Fives Coordinator is in the process of implementing effective systems to personally monitor and mentor practitioners to assess performance. However the supervisor has yet to undertake formal appraisal of her own team members which would ensure training needs are identified and develop work practice. Practitioners have sufficient knowledge of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage to help children make progress in their learning and implement this appropriately.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures undertaken through the Naval Under Fives organisation ensure the safety of children within the facility. Suitable procedures are in place for the induction of new staff in order to ensure that they are aware of the setting's working practices and policies. All policies and working practices are appropriate to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement. All required documentation is in place and stored appropriately to ensure it is accessible when required yet remains confidential. Organisation of the group and quality ratios contribute towards children's safety and ability to take an active part in the setting. The deployment of staff promotes positive relationships and ensures that children's needs and individual routines are met. 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 was recommended to ensure child protection training forms part of the induction for new staff, that children have access to appropriate toilet and hand washing facilities and ensure that half of the staff team in place at each session hold a level 2 qualifications in childcare.

All practitioners have received an element of child protection training within their NVQ training; the new supervisor has experience of dealing with child protection concerns, the deputy has

requested that she would like to attend the advanced child protection training workshop which one of the other new practitioners has already attended. All practitioners are now required to read the child protection policy and sign as understood as part of the induction process. Toileting facilities have been extended and are now screened to ensure children's privacy. All practitioners now employed at the setting hold National Vocational Qualifications in childcare and education, three of which are level 3. Consequently these improvements have a positive impact on the care, education and welfare of children at the setting.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was recommended to increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and how to use everyday activities and routines to help children develop their learning; improve communication with parents to ensure they are well informed about their child's achievements and progress, and encouraged to become more fully involved in children's learning and improve curriculum planning and assessment of children's progress to ensure this clearly links to the early learning goals and informs planning of activities for each child.

Since the last inspection there is a new fully qualified staff team in post. The team have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and have highlighted information sheets in each room to link daily routines and natural performance to the early learning goals. Procedures to inform parents about their child's achievements and learning are in the process of review with the introduction of a new child development profile which will be shared more frequently with parents. There are also plans to introduce a book lending service and the weekly 'treasure hunt' has been implemented which encourages children and parents to look for connecting items to bring in from home. Improvement is still required in regard to curriculum planning and assessment of children's progress to ensure this clearly links to the early learning goals and informs planning of activities for each child's individual future learning. This has been highlighted as a focus point for development for this term. The improvements implemented so far have a positive impact on children's learning, partnership with parents and overall organisation.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

In December 2005 a concern was raised in relation to Standard 9, Equal Opportunities, Standard 11, Behaviour, and Standard 12, Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers. We asked the provider to carry out an internal investigation and to report to Ofsted within seven days. The Provider responded with a detailed report, including a copy of the behaviour management policy, which demonstrated that they are adhering to the standards under investigation. The Provider remains qualified to be registered.

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):

- review filing of existing injury information to ensure any concerns are noted at the earliest possible time
- ensure formal risk assessments are regularly undertaken on the premises and equipment and fire evacuation is practised on a regular basis.

#### 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):

- develop planning of the curriculum, including all practitioners, to ensure key worker input to help plan activities for children's next steps in individual learning
- ensure regular assessments of children's development are recorded to help identify for their next steps in learning
- extend children's opportunity to develop emergent writing skills by, for example, providing writing resources in the home play area and in other rooms in the setting
- ensure evaluations on focus activities are consistently completed for improvement and success.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)