



Greenash Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127211
Inspection date	23 March 2007
Inspector	Sarer Marcia Tarling
Setting Address	New Ash Green Youth Centre, Ash Road, New Ash Green, Longfield, Kent, DA3 8JY
Telephone number	01474 872441
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Registered person	Greenash 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 good. 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?

Greenash Pre-school has been registered for many years and is run by a committee of parents.

The group operates from the main hall in the Youth Centre, in the village of New Ash Green, near Dartford in Kent. The building is in a central location so is available to a wide group of families living in and around the village. The group has access to the main hall, and on certain days to a small room as well. There is also an enclosed outside area, with safety surface, for the children to use. Other community groups can access the youth club during operational hours and have use of the disabled toilet. Therefore staff accompany children to the main toilets to ensure they are safe.

The group are open from Monday to Friday 09:00 until 12:00, term time only. During the summer term an additional afternoon session is offered to the children moving onto school.

The pre-school is registered to care for up to 32 children from two years to under five years. There are currently 30 children on roll. Of these 14 are funded three-year-olds and seven are funded four-year-olds. The group gains support through the Pre-school Learning Alliance, an Early Years Advisory Teacher and the area Special Educational Needs Coordinator.(SENCO)

There are eight members of staff who work with the children; five of these hold a relevant qualification in early years and childcare and two are working towards one.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's well-being is safeguarded as clear information is obtained about dietary needs and any known allergies. Children are able to help themselves to drinking water when they are thirsty as parents are encouraged to purchase water bottles and to supply fresh drinking water for their child. Midway through the session all children stop play to sit together for refreshments. Parents are asked to provide a healthy snack in a lunch box, the pre-school supplies milk and water and the children are able to pour their own drink using small jugs. Staff are on hand to cut up fruit and to ensure children do not share snacks or eat food that has dropped on the floor. Children are encouraged to learn about a healthy lifestyle as healthy eating posters are displayed and topics such as exercise and eating healthily are introduced. Children enjoy taking part in cooking activities, such as making banana muffins, and greatly enjoy tasting them at snack time.

Children's physical well-being is generally well promoted. They benefit from the fresh air in the outdoor area which offers opportunities to run around and use a variety of equipment. For example, children are developing good co-ordination skills when rolling hoops, balancing on stilts, catching balls, knocking down skittles and pedalling tricycles. Older children are developing an understanding of the effect exercise has on their bodies by expressing that they 'need a drink and a rest' after they have been running. Hand-eye co-ordination is developed as children use a variety of tools at the dough table, thread cotton reels and tap fine pins into a board with a hammer. Staff help to develop children's awareness of their bodies and how to care for them as they invite visitors from the local community to share their expertise. For example, a dental hygienist visits and staff set out support materials such as a set of large teeth and a toothbrush to reinforce the message through role play.

Children are cared for in a clean environment because staff understand that standards of hygiene must be maintained in order to prevent the spread of infection. For example, staff clean the tables, using anti-bacterial spray and colour coded cloths, before and after snack time. Children remove their outdoor shoes and wear slippers or plimsolls to help prevent dirt or mud from spreading. Staff provide cloth shoe bags which the children personalise with their painted hand prints. Soft furnishings are washed regularly and dressing up clothes are clean. Children are learning about the importance of personal hygiene because staff encourage them to wash their hands before snack time and after messy activities. Due to the location of the toilets, children wash their hands using liquid soap, in the main hall using water from a portable container with a tap. However, they always use the sinks in the bathroom, hypo-allergenic soap and paper

hand towels after using the toilet. Staff have a change of children's clothes, in case of accidents, and ensure disposable gloves are worn when dealing with any body fluids.

Children's health is promoted as there is a system in place to record the administration of medication, including obtaining prior written parental permission. There are procedures in place to exclude children who are infectious and to care for children, who may become unwell during the session. Prior written permission is sought for seeking emergency medical treatment and most staff hold a first aid qualification and ensure the first aid kit is appropriately stocked. All accidents are recorded in a duplicate book and the information is given to parents. This helps ensure children are protected in the event of an accident or emergency.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The main entrance is made welcoming, with posters and information for parents and visitors to read. Staff work hard to create a stimulating environment by displaying educational posters and photographs of the children in the main hall. Children benefit from very good security on the premises. Families are greeted at the door by staff who are vigilant to ensure children only leave the premises with a suitable adult. As other community groups use the building staff have positioned a safety barrier and an electronic buzzer at the entrance into the pre-school. Staff always ensure that children are safe by accompanying them to the toilet. Staff check the identity of visitors to the pre-school and ensure they sign a visitors record. This enables staff to monitor unvetted adults on the premises.

Staff check the indoor and outside area for hazards before children arrive each day. Furniture and resources are in a good, clean condition and staff check their safety when setting up and putting away. This helps to minimise accidental injury and ensure the children's ongoing safety. Toys and equipment are well-organised and set out in clearly designated areas. Resources are clearly labelled however, children have few opportunities to select toys or resources for themselves. The outdoor play area has been made safe through the use of safety surfacing and secure fencing.

Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe because staff consistently reinforce some safety rules. For example, they remind children not to push each other when playing outside and to sit down whilst they eat their snack. They are learning to take some responsibility as they help staff to tidy away toward the end of the session. Staff are careful to ensure young children are closely supervised when using equipment such as the climbing frame and slide. However, as a result older or more able children are not able to learn how to take safe risks when they climb or explore large apparatus.

Written procedures covering lost or uncollected children are in place and this helps to promote children's safety, security and well-being. Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely in the event of a real emergency. Children have some opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe when out and about. For example, to practise road safety skills.

Children are safeguarded and protected as staff demonstrate an understanding of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse. They are aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child and would refer any concerns about child protection to the appropriate agencies.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

An effective settling in procedure ensures children separate well from their parents. Young children's emotional well-being is supported as they are able to keep their comforter with them while they settle and staff offer a cuddle on their lap during circle and story time. A visual timetable helps younger children know the routine and what is coming next. There is a key worker system in the pre-school which helps staff get to know the children and ensure parents are informed about their child's progress. Staff make time to give each child good individual attention and know the children and their families well. As a result, children feel secure and build trusting relationships with the staff.

Children show good levels of independence and confidence and they enjoy taking responsibility, for example, as they help each other at tidy-up time and put their own coats on to go outside. Children behave well and are proud when staff praise their hard work and efforts with stickers and hand stamps. Because staff praise children's achievements and encourage them to help each other they feel good about themselves and self-esteem is high.

Staff work together to plan for the children and their development. However, as all planning is line with the Foundation Stage there is little differentiation for the younger children. Some staff have attended training on Birth to three matters however, the framework has not yet been implemented to support the planning and assessment of younger children and to help promote positive outcomes.

Children spend the majority of the session initiating their own play and have opportunities to play in small self selected groups freely moving between activities and making independent choices. They show great concentration when putting together a floor puzzle and enjoy playing together with vehicles and garages on a car mat. However, play is sometimes interrupted for whole group activities when young children have little choice in what they do. Children are all grouped together for physical play, circle time, listening to a story and singing. At these times some children become restless as they find it hard to concentrate for as long as the older children. Furthermore, some play experiences are only provided once a week and children who do not attend full-time, miss out on such opportunities to explore and investigate with messy play, free painting, sand and water.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff implement the Foundation Stage curriculum and build on each child's previous experiences and achievements. Individual children's profiles clearly record their 'starting points', progress and development whilst they are at the pre-school. Staff set out resources and plan focus activities according to the six areas of learning. Planning sheets include information regarding resources required, groupings, extension activities

and points of discussion for staff to follow. The supervisor takes the eldest children out, on a rota basis, to a smaller room where they focus on learning intentions and practise new skills using programmes such as 'Letter land'.

Staff take photographs of children taking part in activities and write down observations on post-it notes. These are then transferred onto the children's profiles. All focus activities are evaluated and the next steps in children's learning are used effectively to inform future plans. Planning is well documented and profiles clearly show children's progress. A record of transfer is completed and shared with parents and the child's school.

Children demonstrate good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children are developing self help skills, for example, they are encouraged to take off their slippers and put on their own shoes when going outside. During role play they dress themselves and do up buttons. Children have good relationships with their peers and the staff team and are able to recount stories from home, ask for help where needed and engage in conversation and play. The children are familiar with the daily routines of the pre-school.

Many of the children in pre-school are confident talkers who enjoy chatting to each other during play. They initiate conversations with members of staff who support children's language development by spending time talking and listening to them. Children have access to a wide range of books and use the book corner independently and with the support of staff. Stories are generally read in large group situations and as a result the older and more able children are not able to fully discuss the text or explore the story further. Children have opportunities to visit the library for a story and song session. Younger children recognise letters from their name and most children can recognise their own name. However, name cards are not available on a writing table for children to refer to. Activities which encourage children to develop their drawing and writing skills are limited. There are few opportunities for mark making or which encourage the children to write for a purposes on a daily basis, for example, wipe clean boards, paper and notepads in the role play or construction area. Children are encouraged to associate names and objects with letters and sounds through using alphabet puzzles, letter games and magnetic letters during focus activities.

Children are developing confidence with numbers. For example, children point and count the number of staff and children during circle time. When looking at the calendar they can identify the number two and zero and some manage to say 'twentieth!' Children have the opportunity to see numbers on puzzles and posters and songs and rhymes are used to promote maths development. While playing with cars together a three and four-year-old confidently count their vehicles and the four-year-old manages to divide the 12 cars equally. Children are beginning to understand mathematical concepts, such as shape, weight and size. They compare their heights in a mirror and are able to measure themselves against a height chart.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Children play with a range of resources which enable them to learn about the wider world. These include dressing-up clothes, persona puppets, puzzles and small world figures. There are opportunities for children to learn about different festivals and celebrations during the year. Children have enjoyed having their hands painted and making celebration cards. Staff have displayed craft work on notice boards in the health centre and in local shops. Children have visited a bank following a fund-raising

event for 'Children in Need' and sung carols to senior citizens at the lunch club although regular visitors do not come into the pre-school. Children have some opportunities to use and learn about information technology, for example, they use table top electronic toys. Children learn about nature and life cycles as they observe frog spawn and an ant farm.

Craft work is generally a planned activity and as a result children have limited access to a range of activities, resources and materials that encourage them to express themselves creatively. For example, scissors, free painting and sticking, junk modelling, sand and water. Children express themselves through role play and greatly enjoy dressing-up in the different animal costumes. The role play area is set out as different concepts, for example, as an office, a vets, or hospital as well as a traditional home corner. Children have good opportunities to design and build using a range of construction materials and are learning to use simple tools.

The children demonstrate good spatial awareness and they are able to move around safely and independently, in both the hall and outdoor area. They enjoy action games such as 'Mr Wolf' and 'Please Mr Crocodile'. Outdoor play is not included in the planning and the use of the outdoor area is limited during the winter months. As a result children are not able to fully explore the curriculum all year round and learning opportunities are reduced. Physical activities are not always sufficiently challenging for the older or more able children. For example, staff closely supervise climbing equipment and children are given clear directions as to its use. Children are able to develop and enhance their hand/eye control and co-ordination through activities such as, threading cotton reels and independently pouring water into a cup from a jug.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents is good. The pre-school is run by a committee of parents and as a result they have many opportunities to be involved in the pre-school, such as fundraising and volunteering to help. Children benefit from the positive relationships that staff have with the parents. Effective methods of daily communication strengthen links between home and the pre-school. Parents receive a prospectus when their child first starts. This contains details of the policies and procedures, how the setting operates and good information about Foundation Stage curriculum and the six areas of learning. The notice board displays the group's certificates and keeps parents up to date with events and topics. However, details of planning, for example, short term plans, are not currently displayed for parents to see. Parents say they are kept up to date by the regular newsletter and commented on how well staff support their children in learning through play. They are kept well informed about their children's progress through informal and formal meetings with their child's key-worker and by regularly seeing their child's observation profile.

The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children have some opportunities to talk about their experiences during circle time; although this is limited due to the large number and varying ages of the children. Children are familiar with the routine, for example, they know they have their snack when they come in from playing outside and that they go home after story time. Children generally behave well and their self-esteem is fostered as staff routinely praise them. The staff team are good role models, they are calm, patient and

polite to each other and the children. Children respond well to this positive approach and they are keen to please. For example, they take pride in completing their tidy-up tasks and enjoy helping staff and each other. Helpful and good behaviour is acknowledged through the use of stickers and hand stamps. If a minor squabble does occur children are encouraged to apologise and helped to understand what they have done wrong. Parents are kept informed if staff have any concerns about a child's behaviour and an incident record is maintained. Staff use books such as 'I'm sorry' and 'Being Kind' to talk to children about their behaviour.

Information is sought from parents relating to children's individual needs and appropriately recorded on application forms. This ensures that staff are aware of children's cultural, religious and language needs, as well as of any allergies or medical conditions. Simple activities help children discover how other people live. For example, they learn about a celebration or festival from another culture such as, Hanukah, Chinese & Jewish New Year, and taste different fruits from around the world. Children play with a good selection of resources depicting positive images and role models of people in the community, including those with a disability. Some of these resources are borrowed from the 'Treasure Chest' resources centre. For example, musical instruments, persona dolls and puppets, small world figures, dolls, books and puzzles. Although there are limited visual displays of children's work around the room, there are posters and photographs of children taking part in different activities. Children bring in items for 'show and tell' and this contributes to them feeling valued in the environment. Gender stereotyping is minimised in the setting as toys are suitable for all children and as they have equal access.

The pre-school welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Appropriate systems are put into place to support children. For example, the child's key-worker and SENCO liaise with parents, the Area SENCO and other outside agencies. This helps staff receive guidance on how best to support children. The SENCO works with parents and other professionals involved with children's care, putting in place individual education plans which ensure that all children are helped to make progress. Staff are aware that certain behaviour may arise from a child's special need and are able to deal with this appropriately.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are protected as the pre-school has good procedures in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff and volunteers. All new staff complete an induction procedure and are given a full set of policies and procedures. The Supervisor goes through the policies and the expectations of the job. Appraisals take place annually to help monitor the ongoing suitability of staff. Children are never left alone with un-vetted adults.

A total Five of the staff already hold appropriate childcare qualifications and two are working toward gaining one. Most staff have a first aid qualification and systems for staff to attend workshops and training to update their knowledge are in place. Recent training for different staff includes Birth to three matters, special educational needs and training in safeguarding children. However, the practices in place are not completely reflective of the training received, for example, the Birth to three framework is not being used to benefit the younger children.

Staff meetings are held regularly and minutes are taken. Staff discuss all aspects of the running of the group and sometimes use it for cascading training. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and follow clear rotas and routines to ensure children's health and safety.

Children have a self registration system for example, they take their name card from a board and hand it to a member of staff during circle time. Adult to child ratios are adhered to as the setting complies with their certificate of registration and the daily attendance record consolidates this. An operational plan is in place and details how the pre-school will meet the National Standards and promote positive outcomes for children. The pre-school has a set of policies and procedures which provide relevant information on all areas of operation for staff and parents. These are reviewed and updated to ensure they comply with legislation, the National Standards and changes in regulations. Required documentation relating to the care, safety and welfare of children is well maintained and, therefore, effective in keeping children healthy and safe. Children's records are carefully stored and only shared with relevant parties so confidentiality is maintained.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Children's learning and development is well supported by a team of committed staff. The Supervisor and staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the National Standards and the Foundation Stage guidance. The supervisor ensures that appropriate levels of supervision are maintained at all times through good deployment of staff. The organisation of the environment, resources and planned activities is generally effective in promoting children's confidence and learning. However, the session structure and organisation of some of the whole group activities are less well planned. For example, the whole group physical play, snack time, circle and story time are not as effective at meeting individual needs as the free-choice part of the session. The pre-school does not make full use of the outside area for the whole year and does not include this area in the planning.

Children benefit from a staff team who share common aims. They work closely with the supervisor and deputy, supported by the committee members, to ensure the programme is effective. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and set out a range of activities covering the six areas of learning each session. During the summer term the older children are offered an additional afternoon session to prepare them for moving onto school.

The supervisor and deputy use the observations and information about children's next steps from key workers to draw up written plans. Regular discussions ensure all staff are involved in the planning for children's learning and that all staff have an understanding of children's skills and abilities. This helps ensure all staff are able to work to the daily plans and to engage children's interest by bringing a clear focus to planned activities.

The supervisor and staff team routinely monitor and evaluate the nursery education programme in order to help ensure that it is effective for all children. Staff review all planned activities and evaluate them on the back of written plans. They also use the preparation of reports on children's progress, to review how effective their planning has been in helping children to make progress towards the early learning goals. In addition there are arrangements in place to ensure that parents are able to be involved as they are asked to comment on their child's progress report.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the pre-school now ensures children's attendance is recorded accurately and they have produced a written procedure for outings and revised the child protection policy. All staff have completed suitability checks and as a result children are kept safe. A complaints procedure has been updated and is in line with new regulations.

Children sit comfortably at activities and are able to pour their own drinks at snack time. Parents are asked to provide healthy snacks. The pre-school is continually reviewing the presentation of the activities to help ensure they are inviting to children.

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 good. 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):

- adopt an appropriate framework for planning and assessing the development of children under three, such as the Birth to three matters framework
- provide children with daily opportunities to freely explore and experiment with media such as paint, sand, water and junk modelling (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- provide children with daily opportunities to develop their drawing and writing skills. For example by providing a writing table with a varied selection of equipment such as, pens, pencils, scissors, envelopes, rulers, name cards and examples of print. Provide resources in the role play area, such as wipe clean boards and notepads to encourage children to write for a purpose

- include the outside area in planning to ensure all children have access to the full curriculum all year round (also applies to care)
- review the session structure in order that children's self initiated play is not interrupted for the purpose of joining in with whole group activities. Review the use of whole group activities to ensure the needs of the differing ages of children are met. For example, story time and physical play (also applies to care)

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