



Sunbeams Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119757
Inspection date	09 March 2007
Inspector	Lilyanne Taylor
Setting Address	St. Mary's Church Hall, High Street, Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NT
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Registered person	Melanie Jane Lacey
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?

Sunbeams Pre-School has been registered at these premises since 1999. It is a privately owned pre-school and operates from a church hall in the village of Carisbrooke, which is near to the main town of Newport on the Isle of Wight. The pre-school mainly operates from one room within the hall. There is an outdoor play area.

Currently there are 23 children on roll, of these 14 receive funding for nursery education. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school opens five days per week during school term times only. Sessions are from 09:00 to 12:00 Monday and 09:00 to 12:55 Tuesday to Friday.

The proprietor of the setting is the manager and she works alongside seven part-time members of staff. Most staff have relevant early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are beginning to understand the importance of healthy eating; while they have their snacks staff talk to them about what they are eating and how it is good for them. For example, apples help to clean their teeth. Children are provided with a range of healthy snacks, such as breadsticks, rice cakes and fresh fruit. Children's special dietary requirements, allergies and parents' wishes are fully discussed and recorded in detail, ensuring their individual needs are met and respected at all times. In addition to this children bring in their own snacks and lunches from home. These they are able to access independently when they feel hungry throughout the session.

Children's independence is promoted; they pour their own milk, water or juice from jugs and use a knife to cover their crackers in dairy free spread and to cut up pieces of fruit.

Staff implement hygiene procedures effectively to ensure the pre-school is maintained in a satisfactory state of cleanliness for children. For example, they keep tables and kitchen surfaces clean and check the toilets throughout a session.

All staff hold a current first aid certificate and a first aid box is in place. All accidents to children are recorded and appropriate permission is sought from parents prior to the administration of any medication, helping to keep children healthy. Parents consistently sign to say they acknowledge accidents that have occurred and medication that has been administered. Children are protected from the spread of infection. They wash their hands using liquid soap and dry them on individual paper towels. Parents are kept informed of any communicable diseases their child may have come into contact with at the setting or outbreaks of head-lice. In addition to this children who are sick are asked not to attend until they are fully recovered.

Although children are beginning to learn about the importance of personal hygiene through daily routines they are not always reminded to wash their hands when they independently choose to eat their own snacks and lunches. As a result they are not fully protected from germs.

Children have daily opportunities to be outdoors in the fresh air for exercise and physical activity; they have free access to the hard surface outdoor play area which they use in all weathers. Children develop their large motor skills using a range of equipment. For example they ride on bikes, scooters and cars and push wheelbarrows and prams. They show a good sense of space and manoeuvre around equipment and other children well. Children thoroughly enjoy the regular walks they go on around the local community; they visit places such as the fjord, fields, duck pond and castle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe at all times. Staff are fully aware of their individual roles and responsibilities towards the safety of the children. Daily checks as well as formal risk assessments are carried out on all areas children access to ensure hazards and potential dangers are removed. In addition to this the manager conducts a risk assessment of places children are to visit when they are taken on outings to ensure they are safe and suitable. The main gate to the premises is kept secure while children are playing outdoors and a record of all visitors to the setting is maintained. Accident records are monitored to ensure there are no common causes for the accidents children incur.

Children have independent access to a good range of age appropriate equipment and play provisions. The wide range of resources and toys that are available to children are maintained in a satisfactory condition and safe for their use.

The good deployment of staff enables children to be supervised at all times. As a result children have the freedom to independently access the wide range of activities available indoors and outdoors safely. Children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they talk about the correct way to carry scissors and they are aware they should not run in the hall. Regular fire drills are practised, at different times and days, to ensure all staff and children are fully aware of the procedure to follow should emergency evacuation be necessary. Consequently, children learn how to stay safe in the event of a fire and staff can ensure children of all ages can be swiftly and safely evacuated.

Systems and procedures ensure children arrive safely; a member of staff greets children in the hall and marks their attendance on the register. In addition to this a list of all staff present is maintained so it is clear to see whose care children have been in. Children are only allowed to be collected by persons their parent have authorised and should a child not be collected then systems in place ensure they are kept safe.

Children are well protected because staff have a good understanding of child protection and the procedures to follow if concerns are identified. The clear policies and procedures in place are shared with parents to ensure they are aware of the setting's responsibilities. In addition to this all injuries children come into the setting with are recorded and shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children confidently come into the setting. They are extremely happy and settled and benefit from the secure, homely and loving environment in which they begin their early learning. They settle quickly as they are greeted at the door by staff on their arrival.

Children are assisted as necessary and continually praised and encouraged, helping them to develop confidence and learn new skills. Staff's interactions with children are kind and sensitive, recognising that younger children may need additional support and are not always confident to fully participate in all aspects of the session.

Children are interested, involved in their play and are keen to take part in the wide and stimulating range of activities provided that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Staff take the time to get to know the children well; they listen to what children have to say and do and have a good understanding of their individual interests, care and development needs. Children form friendships with other children and have a good relationship with staff. As a result all children enjoy the time they spend at the setting.

Young children are given lots of smiles and put their arms out to staff whilst climbing onto their lap for a cuddle or to listen to a story. Relationships are well enhanced because of the effective implementation of a key worker system, which helps to develop strong bonds between staff, children and their parents.

Children are able to create their own work and freely access paints and other materials they want to use during art and craft activities. They have opportunities to explore and be creative using a range of media, for example paint, sand, water, bird's seed and ice cubes. They explore and develop their senses while sorting items contained in treasure baskets.

Children thoroughly enjoy getting messy; they pour paint onto paper then mix the colours with their hands, make bread rolls with dough they have made from scratch and combine water, mud and bird's seed together to make cement cakes. During role-play and free-play children use their imagination well, they play well alongside one another sharing their ideas and negotiating roles.

Children have fun; they learn and develop through their play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Staff have a very clear understanding of how children learn and provide an exciting and stimulating learning environment, in which they can play an active role and become engrossed in their learning. They use a range of teaching methods to ensure younger and less able children are well supported. Staff interact well with the children, they make themselves available to offer help and assistance, knowing when to stand back to let play develop.

Staff observe children while they play and the information they gain is used to draw up play plans. These identify the stage of development individual children are at and what the plans are for their next steps. Staff know all the children extremely well; when presenting activities to children they differentiate the intended learning to suit individual children's learning needs. However, written plans for activities do not reflect this knowledge. Consequently, it is not clear to see how the activities support all children to make progress in their next steps of learning.

Children's learning in most areas is supported to develop through discussion, practical activities and their own self chosen play. Although staff plan activities to encourage children's development in mathematics most children are making limited progress in this area of their learning. Children say and use numbers during their play, however, few observations are carried out to identify the stage of learning individual children are at. In addition to this staff make

little use of incidental learning opportunities to extend or consolidate children's existing knowledge and understanding.

Children move around the setting freely; they confidently move from one play area to another. They participate fully in the wide range of activities provided and are keen and eager to learn.

Staff support children in decision making, enabling them to develop good levels of self-confidence and independence.

Children are able to concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate. They listen well and are able to follow simple instructions with ease. Children's speaking and listening skills are developing well as they talk confidently to the staff and their peers about themselves and their families. They are encouraged to mark their own work and some children are beginning to write their name with some letters correctly formed. Children enjoy listening to stories and join in when appropriate, predicting what's going to happen next. They find their favourite books from the book rack and sit comfortably with their friends or staff on the cushions provided. In addition to this, when children are outdoors they sit on a ride on toy or a chair with their dolls pram alongside to listen to stories being read.

Children competently use a range of tools, such as knives, cutters and scissors and have ample opportunities to explore media and materials during art, craft and cooking activities.

Most of the time children are given time to respond to the effective questioning from staff. They explore and describe the different textures they feel when making bread dough and through discussion they become aware of the changes that occur when all the ingredients are combined together and the dough is left to prove prior to baking. However, although staff ask children questions such as how many cups do we require for snacks or are there two place mats the same they do not give children sufficient time to think and respond, they provide the answer for them.

Children are developing an understanding of time; they set a timer to 10 minutes so they know when their bread rolls are ready to be put in the oven by staff.

Children's imagination is well fostered as they have access to a good range of role-play equipment, providing opportunities for them to act out their real and imagined ideas with their peers. For example, they develop their own ideas and negotiate roles with each other as they pretend to be shopkeepers and customers and when they fill their bikes and scooters up with petrol at the pumps.

Although children enjoy dancing to music and singing nursery rhymes, they have very few opportunities to do so.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy having responsibilities; they willingly offer to help staff pack away the toys and they place a table cloth, cups and place mats on a table in readiness for their snacks. All children

and their families are welcomed in to the setting; they are valued as individuals and respected. Children respond well to the praise and encouragement they are given.

There are effective arrangements in place for caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and all children's individual needs are well met. Children are supported because clear procedures and policies are in place and implemented by the staff. The Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) has attended training and has a good understanding of her role and responsibilities. She builds sound relationships with the parents and the setting has developed links with other agencies, to provide additional support and advice for the children and their families.

Children's behaviour overall is very good; they play well together, learn how to share and take turns and are beginning to accept the needs of others. However, they are not always informed that the language they are using is inappropriate; when children tell staff that "naughty" words have been spoken they fail to address the issue. Consequently, children are not gaining an understanding of language that is acceptable within the setting and that which is not.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents receive essential information about the provision when their child enrolls. They are given a welcome pack which contains some of the policies and procedures the setting works to and a registration form so the individual needs of children are recorded.

Children benefit from the positive relationships staff establish and maintain with their parents. Parents express staff are friendly, approachable and available to discuss any issues that may arise at any time. They praise staff for their advice and support and particularly value the opportunities they have to discuss their child's progress and care. Newsletters are used effectively to inform the parents of important events and any health issues that may affect their children.

The setting has an open door policy and invites parents into the group at any time encouraging them to be actively involved, by helping during the sessions or assisting with outings.

Good settling in procedures are offered to all children; they are able to attend pre-visits with their parents prior to attending. This provides them with the opportunity to become familiar with the staff and the surroundings in which they will be cared for. Parents have the opportunity to discuss any specific care arrangements or individual needs their children may have. As a result, children are provided with appropriate care and their transition from home to the setting is smooth.

Systems in place ensure if a parent should express any concerns about the care their child is receiving or the running of the setting they will be investigated and responded to within the required timescales. In addition to this a poster displayed provides parents with information of how they can contact the regulatory body to express any concerns they have if they should wish to do so.

The partnership with parents of children in receipt of funding for nursery education is satisfactory.

Parents are able to discuss their child's ongoing progress with their child's key worker at any time.

Each child has an individual play plan that their key worker has drawn up. These identify the stages of learning children are at and what the aims are for their next steps. These plans are shared with parents and they are invited to comment on them and/or share their knowledge of any areas of development they have noticed with their child at home. However, because parents receive little information of the Foundation Stage it is not always clear for them to gain an understanding of the learning their children gain through their play. As a result this impacts on them being able to be fully contribute to their child's learning and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children have a wonderful time at the setting because all practitioners have a good understanding of how children learn and how important play is in their development.

Children are cared for by a highly qualified staff team; the manager of the setting holds an early year's Foundation Degree and two members of staff are working towards achieving the same, most remaining staff hold an NVQ level 2 or 3 qualification.

Children benefit because robust and rigorous systems are in place for the recruitment of new staff. However, systems to ensure the ongoing suitability of established staff have yet to be developed.

The premises are well organised and designated areas are arranged to maximise children's play and learning opportunities. This ensures they are fully occupied and stimulated throughout the day, which has a positive effect on their behaviour.

Staff are vigilant in their supervision of children and this is achieved because a high adult to child ratio is maintained. Staff provide a calm and friendly atmosphere where children are safe and happy. Staff work well as a team. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities and their effective deployment ensures all children receive appropriate support.

All documentation is in place, maintained as required and stored securely. The setting display their certificate of registration so it is clear for parents to see how many children can be cared for at any one time. In addition to this records of attendance are completed to show the actual times children and staff are present.

Children's health, safety and well-being is positively promoted through the effective leadership of the setting. It is acknowledged that the manager of the setting is very receptive to ways in which the care and education provided to children may be improved; she has shown a positive attitude, and taken appropriate steps to significantly improve the organisation and monitoring of the provision since the last inspection. This has had a positive impact on the quality and standard of care and education children are provided with.

The manager is very supportive of staff and regular meetings ensure the care needs of all children are met. Most policies and procedures that underpin the daily operation of the provision are effectively carried out in practice.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory.

The manager has a wealth of experience and knowledge. She has a clear vision for the setting and is fully committed to improving the quality of nursery education for all children. She plays an active role in the setting, supporting, encouraging and motivating the staff team. Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined; every member of the team knows exactly what is expected of them. Staff take full advantage of available training opportunities to improve their knowledge and understanding and to ensure their practice is kept up to date.

Staff are keen to ensure many learning opportunities are available to children. As a result children make steady progress towards the early learning goals in most areas of their learning. The implementation of a successful key worker system helps children to develop self assurance and sense of belonging to the setting. Staff work together to provide a broad range of activities within a relaxed, well organised, child centred environment.

Although systems for planning and monitoring the educational programme offered ensure most aspects of the curriculum are sufficiently included, written plans of activities do not clearly show how the individual learning needs of children based on their play plans is supported.

The manager of the setting recognises the strengths within the provision and is aware of the areas for improvement. Continual self assessment remains a high priority and all staff work together to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the setting. As a result all outcomes for children are positive.

The manager and staff are enthusiastic and work extremely well together as a team to provide a harmonious environment for children to play and learn.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provide

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to take action with the following;

put in place effective procedures for appointing suitable staff; put in place arrangements to protect children from persons who are not vetted; ensure the operational plan of the pre-school is working in practice, and meets the needs of all children; devise a system for planning and implementing a suitable range of activities for children, which is appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs; ensure that the premises are maintained at an adequate and comfortable temperature; ensure children do not have access to the storage room; conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying action to be taken to minimize identified risks; make sure that low-level glass panels are safe or inaccessible; ensure fire guards are securely fixed to walls; display written procedures to be followed in the event of a fire; put in place an effective system so access to the premises is monitored; obtain written permission from parents before administering medication to children and keep a written record, signed by

parents, of medicines given; request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment; ensure the strategies which are in place for the management of children's behaviour are implemented by all staff; ensure that all records relating to day care activities are readily accessible and available for inspection at all times; put in place procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost or a parent failing to collect a child and ensure all the policies and procedures which the pre-school works to are upheld in practice.

It was further recommended that the setting obtain literature to improve staff's knowledge of health and safety requirements; increase staff's awareness to safety, so they are more vigilant and children are protected from accidents; ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing and develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues.

The manager has made some significant improvements to the setting since the last inspection. The action taken in addressing the actions and recommendations raised has had a positive impact on improving the health, safety and well-being of children.

The manager attended recruitment training; as a result appropriate vetting procedures are now in place. This ensures all staff are suitable to work with children under the age of eight years. All un-vetted persons such as students and visitors to the setting are signed in and shadowed by a member of staff.

Regular meetings are held with staff to discuss the policies and procedures the setting works to and the individual care or learning needs of children. This ensures staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and the needs of all children are met.

Staff observe children in a range of play situations; they assess the stage of development children are at and take note of any interests they have. Further activities are then provided based on this information.

Children play in an environment that is able to be maintained at a comfortable temperature; new thermostatically controlled heaters have been installed. As a result of this fire guards are no longer in use.

Children are kept safe and free from harm at all times through the rigorous risk assessments carried out, the effective deployment of staff and the implementation of policies and procedures. Children are not allowed access to the storage room and all low level glass panels have either been removed or boarded. The entrance door to the premises is kept secure; only authorised persons can gain access. In the event of child being lost or not collected from the setting appropriate procedures for dealing with the situation are now in place.

Procedures for evacuating the premises in the event of an emergency are clearly displayed. Required procedures for administering medication and for staff to be able to seek emergency first aid for children are now in place and agreed with parents.

Most policies and procedures that the setting works to are upheld in practice. However, when children use inappropriate language staff do not always use effective strategies to ensure children become aware of the behaviour expectations of the setting and children are not always

encouraged to follow good hygiene procedures. As a result recommendations to address these two issues have been raised within this inspection report.

All records relating to day care activities are now kept in secure filing boxes at the premises and readily available for inspection.

Health and Safety training has been attended by some staff and the information they gained has been shared with staff that have not attended training.

A member of staff has responsibility for monitoring entries made in the accident book. This ensures that if there is a common cause identified for the accidents children have appropriate action can be taken.

Staff have attended child protection training; they have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and the signs that may indicate a child were being abused. As a result children's welfare is protected.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting were asked to address the following key issues; to increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage; implement an effective system to plan, assess and evaluate activities and to implement an effective system to monitor and record children's progression.

Since the last inspection there has been a change to the staff employed at the setting. As a result all staff who regularly work with children funded for nursery education are qualified and have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones of the early learning goals children work towards achieving. A system to plan, assess and evaluate activities has been introduced; each member of staff has responsibility for an area of learning and plans an activity to support this. A system to monitor and record children's progress is now in place. Each child has an individual play plan which details the achievements they have made in each area of their learning and development and what the plans are for their next steps.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are 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):

- ensure good hygiene practice is encouraged when children have their snacks or lunch independently throughout a session
- ensure staff address issues regarding the language some children use so they gain an understanding of behaviour that is acceptable and that which is not (applies to nursery education also)
- develop procedures to confirm staff's ongoing suitability

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):

- ensure the intended learning outcome children are expected to gain from activities is clearly written on the planning sheets so it is clear to see how all children are supported to make progress in their next steps of learning based on the information written on their play plans
- make more use of incidental opportunities, effective questioning and observations to ensure all children are fully supported and helped to make progress in all aspects of their learning and development of mathematics
- increase the opportunities children have to engage in musical movement and singing activities
- increase the information available to parents in relation to the Foundation Stage curriculum so they are able to be fully involved in their child's learning and progress

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