



Toybox Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109797
Inspection date	26 January 2007
Inspector	Judith Reed
Setting Address	Ellen Newbury Hall, Chapel Road, Sarisbury Green, Southampton, Hampshire, SO31 7FB
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Registered person	Christine Jones
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Toybox Pre-School has been open for more than 20 years. It operates from a large room in the church hall in Sarisbury Green. The group is privately run and serves the local community. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre school at any one time. The pre school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 during school term time.

There are currently 19 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. At present there are no children attending with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language.

There are four members of staff working with the children. Two have early years qualifications and one member of staff is currently on a training programme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are healthy as they help themselves to tissues and dispose of them appropriately in the waste bin. Children also access the toilets independently and they are gently reminded to wash and dry their hands on individual paper towels as necessary. Staff are experienced and trained to care for children's medical needs. They have recently received training to administer asthma inhalers from a medical professional. Medication administration documentation is in place and written permission for emergency medical treatment is also available for each child. A first aid kit is available and staff have suitable first aid training. Children wash their hands before having a snack and staff ensure tables are thoroughly cleaned.

Children are called for their snack in key worker groups. They help themselves to a healthy snack of bread sticks, raisins or fresh fruit during each session. Children know the routine well and pour their own drinks of milk or water. They are praised and encouraged to eat nicely, using a piece of kitchen roll to wipe their faces and hands after snack. Children confidently dispose of the rubbish in the waste bin and replace their cups on the tray before returning to play.

Children experience some physical play activities during each session. Staff carefully include physical play in the weekly planning although there is currently no opportunity to play outside. Activities include a challenging obstacle course, circle games, riding tricycles and throwing bean bags into hoops. Children relish the opportunity for physical play and enthusiastically join in the range of activities offered. They enjoy the obstacle course as they are given individual challenges by the staff who know them well. One child is asked to crawl slowly through the tunnel and slide across the bench on their tummy, and another is asked to jump high off the bench. All present join in the search for a ball in the home corner.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are safe as they have sole use of the hall during sessions and the outer door is kept securely locked. Visitors use a doorbell to gain entry to the building and a telephone is available for emergencies. A small toilet with wash hand basin is available off the main play room. Another toilet is available off the entrance lobby. The kitchen is not used by children and the door is kept closed at all times. The play room is heated with radiators which have guards placed around them. The guards are not fixed and may be a hazard to children. Daily risk assessments are completed to ensure safety for children in most areas of the building. A regular fire evacuation drill is practised with the children.

Children are offered a good choice of toys and activities during each session. The staff ensure toys are safe, clean and suitable for the children present, using anti-bacterial wipes to clean equipment as necessary.

Children are safeguarded as staff are aware of child protection procedures and would report concerns to the child protection officer. All staff are aware of their professional responsibilities regarding child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter confidently and change their shoes before moving into the room to access activities. They spend a few minutes of free play before the door is locked and they join staff on the mat for registration. Children adjust quickly to the expectations of the setting and confidently choose and carry out their own projects. Children join in a brief prayer of thanks before being part of a discussion about the weather and their journeys to pre school. This is a comfortable and happy time and the staff ensure all those who wish to talk have an opportunity. Staff share their exciting news and invite children to comment on pictures they are shown.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and developing their skills in all areas of development. Staff know their key worker children very well and allow the children to lead the activities, changing plans as necessary. Effective planning shows a theme for the week with a stepping stone from the Foundation Stage curriculum for each area of learning. Plans include extension activities as well as assessment opportunities. Staff make incidental observations of children's learning throughout the sessions. These notes are added to each child's folder, together with suitable photographic evidence, filed in order but not always clearly dated. The folders contain sheets pre-printed with the stepping stones of development. Records are clear and easy to understand. Children are interested and motivated to take part in the innovative range of activities offered. Staff use their experience and knowledge to create suitable games and activities for children to help them learn.

Some children join in a frog game activity linked to the story of the week. The game was created by a member of staff and is a bingo style game with coloured frogs. It is very quick and simple and is ideal for the age and stage of children attending. Children understand about taking turns and have a go at taking the different coloured frogs from the pile. The staff member at the table uses positional language to assist children in game. Other children spend an extended amount of time playing in the sand pit. They start by searching for frogs in the sand and counting the number found, then take turns to hide the frogs again. Children add water to the sand to change the texture and make sand castles or print in the sand with equipment available. The children build an island in the sand for the frogs and make footprints in the sand. The group play together and add their creative ideas to extend the story.

Children sit close to a member of staff to share stories in the book area. They choose a story and use props such as the play birthday cake to bring it to life. Another child chooses a story which involves repetition and alliteration for them to join in. Staff explain the meaning of different statements such as "she spoke sternly" as necessary. Once again activities are extended to include "finding the golden ball" similar to the story, and children hunt for a ball in the home corner after taking part in the obstacle course.

Children take part in a letter spotting activity. A member of staff asks the children to spot the letter she names and makes the sound of, such as 'h' for hedgehog or 'j' for jelly. They find the letter from the alphabet spread across the floor and place it in order, sticking it to the floor. The children then take turns to move the remote control duck to move around and choose letters which they name.

Children take every opportunity to paint pictures and build interesting constructions with boxes, glue and tape. Staff encourage children to write their names on their work. Children mix colours together and use their hands as well as brushes to apply paint to their choice of paper. They wear overalls to protect their clothes. Children experiment with boxes and glue, using their imagination to build trains and cars or whatever they like.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated as individuals. Staff know children well and build very good relationships with them. Children learn about diversity through taking part in cultural celebrations such as Christmas, and Chinese New Year. They collect items for a charity shoe box appeal which helps them learn about children in other parts of the world. Children see pictures around the hall showing children from around the world and use books which reflect diversity. Toys such as dolls, cooking implements and small world dolls also reflect diversity. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are valued as individuals and staff know and understand their respective characteristics. Staff work closely with advisors from the local authority to support all children and families. They are experienced in caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff are willing to take additional training to support the needs of all children.

Children generally behave well and understand what is expected. They know the routine of the pre school, joining in with activities, snack time and physical play. Children are praised and encouraged throughout their activities. Staff warn children when activities are going to be changed to give them the opportunity for one more turn. Children enjoy many opportunities to talk with staff and join in with the whole group. Most children take turns well. They are asked to spend a few minutes looking at a book if they cannot do as they are asked. Staff work closely with families when children's behaviour is challenging.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents state that they are very happy with the care of their children and they have no concerns. Children are well cared for due to open, friendly, communication between parents and staff, however, parents are not always fully aware of policies, procedures and their own child's development. Parents state that they are unclear about policies and procedures of the group, although these are available to them on the notice board. Staff have not made parents fully aware of the key worker system or the development of their own children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management is good. The whole staff team are very experienced and most have worked in the pre school for many years. They know each other well and support one another as a staff team. All staff make observations of children's activities and feed these into key worker folders. Most staff are key workers and inexperienced staff work with those who are more experienced to build their knowledge. The staff team work together to plan and organise an interesting, relevant and innovative range of activities for children. Activity sheets show good evaluation of activities. The activities are aimed at the correct age group and staff are well aware when children meet the stepping stones. Staff attend local cluster meetings to further their own development and learning. Regular appraisals help to develop the whole team. Peer on peer observations have also taken place and this has proved very interesting and valuable.

The whole pre school is well organised and children initiate and develop their own learning with support from staff. Children are settled, comfortable and happy in the pre school environment. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Visitors sign in a record sheet and children are registered into the setting. The records do not show children's time of arrival or departure from the pre school.

All documentation is removed from the pre school each day as no secure storage is available. The owner takes the documentation to her own home to ensure it is secure and private at all times. She ensures all necessary documentation is available during session times.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre school was asked to ensure visitors were recorded, offer children nutritious snacks, use an incident record book, keep a written record of medication administered and obtain written permission for emergency medical treatment for each child. The pre school was also asked to ensure physical play was offered during every session.

Children's physical development is planned for each session, visitors are recorded and children are safeguarded. Children are offered a healthy snack during each session, an incident record is available, parents' permission for emergency treatment is obtained and medication, which is administered to children, is recorded to ensure children remain healthy at all times.

At the last education inspection the pre school was asked to improve opportunities for gross motor skills, formalise plans including all six areas of learning, to provide information for parents about the Foundation Stage and encourage children to be more independent throughout their play activities and routine activities. Plans show all six area of learning and include a stepping stone for each area of learning. Staff try to ensure that children are independent and take off their own shoes and coat. They have written to parents to ask them to allow children to be independent at this time. Daily physical exercise is provided by a session of physical play when children have an obstacle course or ride tricycles using their gross motor skills. Information provided for parents is limited and this remains a recommendation from this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

- ensure fireguards are fixed in place to keep children safe at all times
- ensure register shows children's times of arrival and departure.

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 opportunities for parents to be informed about the progress and achievements, and be made aware of the next steps in the development of their own children

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