



Firestation Pre-School (Malton and Norton)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400255
Inspection date	29 January 2007
Inspector	Carol-Anne Shaw
Setting Address	Sheepfoot Hill, Castlegate, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 7EA
Telephone number	01653 694768
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Registered person	Firestation 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Firestation Pre-School has been registered since 1962. It operates from a converted building in rooms that are self-contained and it is situated centrally between Malton and Norton. The outside play area is enclosed. The group is managed by a voluntary committee. There are presently 61 children on the register aged from two to four years old.

The group is open Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 11.30 and from 12.30 to 15.00 term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school serves the local area and community. There are currently 31 funded three-year-olds and two funded four-year-olds attending.

There are seven staff working with the children on a full and part time basis. Almost all have a relevant childcare qualification with one staff member working towards a qualification. The

group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. They are presently working towards the local authority quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff promote good hygiene practices as they implement the procedures for keeping children healthy, for example, they follow a cleaning rota which is effective. Children learn about being healthy through the daily routines, they understand the importance of regular hand washing during significant times of the day, after visiting the toilet and before eating. This prevents the spread of infection. The procedures minimise the risk of infection to children as the sick child policy is shared with parents through the prospectus and the operational plan.

Children's health is protected because a number of staff hold a relevant food hygiene certificate. The snacks are prepared hygienically and staff are aware of good storage of foods, in line with current guidance. Children's health is effectively protected by the use of systems that protect them regarding the administration of medication and the recording of accidents. Children enjoy good periods of outdoor play where they benefit from fresh air and exercise. They also enjoy walks to the local park, supporting their physical development.

Children have their health and dietary needs met; staff use the information from parents effectively. Children's dietary requirements and preferences are adhered to at all times. The group provide a range of healthy and nutritious snacks which include fresh fruit, for example, grapes, bananas and yoghurt. Children are beginning to understand the importance of healthy eating and good nutrition as they discuss why the fruits eaten at snack time are good for them. They also look at different foods during topics.

Children are able to have quiet times according to their needs because the staff plan the timetable to be flexible. They are able to access water when thirsty and encouraged to drink after exercise to maintain hydration.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment. The risk assessment has recently been revised, along with a range of implemented policies and procedures, to maintain children's safety and well-being. The setting is warm with good natural daylight in most areas. Children are able to move around freely as space is good and organised effectively, allowing good movement between activities. The premises are kept secure and access is only gained through the main door where the staff make identity checks and require visitors to sign in and out. They are also accounted for on the premises at all times. Likewise, the collection of children is fully monitored by only allowing children to leave with those persons known to staff and authorised by parents.

Children independently select activities that are safely stored on low-level shelves and boxes which are clearly labelled with pictures to promote good understanding of where resources belong. They are learning to take responsibility in keeping themselves and their environment safe by actively helping to put toys away.

Children's safety is assured because the staff undertake regular emergency evacuation procedures with the children. Staff supervise children at all times. Effective procedures are in place to ensure children are safe when on outings. The children enjoy the outings to the park and the library. Children learn how to keep themselves safe when outside the setting. They are encouraged not to run, and to be careful when riding in the small cars and as they take turns on the equipment.

Children's safety and welfare is further assured as staff clearly understand the procedures for recording and reporting any concerns relating to child protection. The designated person has undertaken recent training. She demonstrates knowledge and awareness of the signs and symptoms of different types of abuse and neglect, therefore is confident to protect children from harm. Parents are made aware of the group's procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals because staff get to know them well and provide them with good support. Relationships between staff and children are good, which contributes to children's well-being. The effective key worker system ensures children are cared for by familiar adults who support and encourage them. As a result, they are aware of and meet children's needs effectively. The children clearly enjoy attending the pre-school, where the staff create a fun and caring atmosphere. Children's progress is recorded using the 'Birth to three matters' framework for the younger children, however this is not used effectively to inform future planning.

Children learn new skills and respond well, for example, they enjoy the painting activity, making the blue collages using glue and paint with lots of blue glitter. The younger children enjoy their play, they access all the areas of learning, enjoying the sand tray and painting. Children have regular opportunities to enjoy all activities.

Children enjoy story time in groups and individually with a member of staff, or simply as a quiet activity on their own. The rainbow fish story, with the use of the puppet, supported the theme very well, meeting both the younger and older children's needs.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals, they enjoy a sound range of activities to promote their learning. The organisation for indoor play is very good covering all areas of the curriculum, however, the arrangements for outdoor play is not as effective. Children are settled and confident in the pre-school environment. They enjoy exploring play opportunities and are learning to make choices about what they do, and are therefore more independent in their play and thinking.

The staff effectively promote independence by encouraging children to make choices from a range of activities readily accessible to them. They are beginning to select, sort, choose and state their preferences with confidence. Children concentrate well as they play, learn and ask questions, which helps them to make sense of the world and develop their knowledge and understanding.

Children are developing good communication skills, for example, they contribute to group discussions. They listen with enjoyment to stories and enjoy books as they learn that print carries meaning. Children have opportunities to observe change as they grow plants and vegetables; they learn about caring for living things through topics. Children access resources to support their understanding of technology and they are confident users of the computers.

A particular strength of the setting is the creative play. Children engage in a variety of activities to develop their creative skills. They particularly enjoy making pictures to go on the walls. The staff show the children how to mix colours and use the paint brushes as they create lively and exciting pictures, for example, the under sea topic.

Children have opportunities to count and to use their mathematical thinking during snack times as they count cups and spoons. Children learn about shapes during play, for example, children using different size squares for the blue collage activity. Outdoor physical play is enjoyed by the children. They run, climb and ride on their favourite toys. Staff are effective in encouraging children to share and take turns. Children learn to use small tools and equipment, for example, the play dough tools and the glue spreaders. Children learn about the local community, visiting the local park and library.

The children make good progress overall because staff have a sound knowledge of how to plan activities which embrace each area of learning. They are not, however, sufficiently confident to use the information from the observations about what children already know to develop and extend learning opportunities for the differing abilities of the children. As a result, more able children are not sufficiently challenged in some areas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

There are suitable settling in procedures in place; children are encouraged to attend with their parent for short periods to familiarise themselves with the staff and their surroundings. This enables children to gain a sense of belonging and, as a result, they settle in well. The equal opportunities policy is understood and implemented by staff and shared with parents. The children are treated with equal concern and respect. The policy is reflected in admissions, curriculum, special needs, food, drink and employment. There are some opportunities for children to learn about our diverse society. However, limited activities are available to effectively help children in this aspect of their learning.

The nursery has a policy which relates to the care of children with any special care or educational needs, although there are no children with additional needs attending at the moment. However, the staff have knowledge and experience to ensure the children's individual needs would be met through partnership with parents and liaison with external agencies, with parental consent.

The staff would implement the code of practice and would inform parents of the correct sources for further support. Presently there are no children who attend who have English as an additional language. However, there are systems in place to support such children to ensure that they would have fun and enjoyment when attending the nursery.

There is a policy in place to support behaviour which is adhered to by all staff. Consequently, children behave well and are beginning to show care and concern for each other. Positive interactions from staff promote children's self-esteem. Children receive ongoing praise and encouragement for their efforts, for example, the staff praise the children for their creative work, for sharing and being kind. As a result, children learn right from wrong and behave well. The older children show care and concern for the younger children as they share at snack time. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from continuity of care between home and the setting because the staff work in partnership with parents to meet the needs of the children. For example, they talk to parents daily keeping them informed about their child's session in the group. Parents complete a comprehensive admission form, which ensures that the staff are aware of their children's individual needs. Parents receive informative newsletters and they are invited to access their children's individual file of achievements. Parents also have information shared with them through the notice board and regular discussion with the key workers, which ensures a good partnership between home and the pre-school for the benefit of the children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. Comprehensive planning is in place to cover all six areas of learning, the evaluation of activities and the monitoring of the nursery education. However, the planning for learning is not linked to the individual assessments of children. Consequently, with the lack of challenge, there are missed opportunities for extending children's learning.

The staff work well together as a team. They organise the environment for the most part effectively. They plan a variety of activities for both indoors and outdoors. However, the outdoor curriculum still requires developing to cover all areas of learning.

The children enjoy their time at the group. They are therefore eager to attend and settle well into their play. The staff ensure children are supervised effectively, giving them opportunities to explore the various areas of play. The staff team are aware of their roles and responsibilities which contribute to the smooth running of the sessions.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are effective, therefore this ensures children are well protected and cared for by staff who are suitable and have the knowledge and understanding to promote children's development in all areas. The management have a sound understanding of how to ensure initial and continuing suitability of staff, by implementing the rigorous procedures that have been developed in line with current requirements.

Training is promoted positively with short courses accessible through the local authority for staff. Several staff have attended training to develop understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, with further opportunities being offered to staff to promote their professional development, therefore enhancing the care provided for the children.

The documentation is organised and reviewed appropriately. The operational plan is detailed and available to parents and visitors to the setting.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There has been progress since the last inspection. At the last inspection there were recommendations made relating to documentation in relation to safety and child protection. The group now have the required policy and have extended the child protection procedures. This helps to maintain the safety of children.

The nursery education had a recommendation relating to extending group and circle activities to extend language and support communication. These have been developed and are working to progress children's learning. The recommendations have been followed, resulting in the pre-school now meeting the needs of the children they care for.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards.

Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 1: Suitable Person. The concerns were originally shared with another agency. A childcare inspector from Ofsted Early Years then interviewed the manager on 28 July 2006. Actions were raised and have been satisfactorily met by the registered provider. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- further develop the planning for the younger children to link with the assessment systems that are in place
- provide a range of activities to support children's understanding of diversity.

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 the planning to link with the children's assessment so all children are sufficiently challenged to build on what they already know and can do
- develop the outside area ensuring that all areas of the curriculum are included to support children's learning and development.

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