

Phoenix Pre-School/Under 5's

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	321586
Inspection date	20 April 2007
Inspector	Rosemary Beyer
Setting Address	Park Grove Primary School, Dudley Street, The Groves, York, North Yorkshire, YO31 8LP
Telephone number	01904 673510
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Registered person	Phoenix Pre-School/Under 5's
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?

Phoenix Pre-School has been registered since 1998. It is a committee run group which operates from the Phoenix room in Park Grove School in York. The group is close to the local amenities and serves the local community but also has children attending from further afield in the city.

The group is registered for 20 children, and currently has 51 children from three to five years on the roll. This includes 47 who are funded. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The Rising Five group has contact with the reception class on a regular basis. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcome to attend and systems are in place to support them, with good contact established with the local authority inclusion development officer. The group welcomes children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.45 and on Tuesdays and Thursday from 12.45 until 15.15. It has the use of a large playroom, a kitchen and cloakroom. The children also have access to the playground, a grassed play area and a wildlife garden. There are currently six staff in post, most of whom either have appropriate childcare qualifications or are working towards them. Some staff have been with the group for

several years. Parents are able to help at sessions through the rota and support the group through membership of the committee.

The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years and Extended Schools Services. Phoenix Pre-School is part of a partnership between the Salvation Army, Kaleidoscope Day Nursery and Park Grove School.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

All the children attending are over three years of age. They are cared for on clean and well maintained premises where effective hygiene practice, consistently applied, protects them from infection. They learn to look after themselves by washing their hands after personal care and before food. Most remember, but staff are vigilant to ensure all have clean hands.

A healthy diet is promoted within the setting with snacks of fruit available each day. If older children are present they can prepare their own snack. During cold weather toast or sandwiches are provided. Water or milk are given at snack time but water is available at all times for the children to help themselves. Children are able to take a packed lunch into the adjacent school, to familiarise themselves with the lunchtime procedures, before they start to attend full time.

Staff are very conscious of special dietary requirements and any allergies. They have undertaken training to enable them to deal with reactions to foodstuffs and they adjust the snack if children have special dietary needs. The children are developing a good knowledge of what they need to eat to stay fit and well. They also know they need fresh air and exercise. If children are tired they use the book corner settees to sit quietly until they are ready to play again.

Children's physical development is satisfactory. Most days the children play outside in the fresh air. If the weather is good, activities are taken into the fenced area so they can move freely in and out depending on their wishes. They move around both inside and out with confidence and safety, walking inside to prevent accidents. They use ride-on toys very confidently and with good control. Children use the secure grassed area, with the permanent climbing frame and sand pit, in the better weather, and on occasions the school gym is made available. They do not, however, have regular use of balancing equipment.

Children do not attend when they are ill, and parents are made aware of the sick child policy and exclusion times in the introductory information. Staff have undertaken training to enable them to manage children with severe allergies and are willing to take further training to support children with different needs. Medication and accident records are kept to ensure parents are kept informed of their children's time in the setting. Staff have written permission to seek medical help or advice in an emergency.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for on secure premises with visitors, parents or carers only admitted by staff. When children arrive or leave staff ensure they are all accompanied by the designated persons. A visitors' book is completed by visitors to the setting, and parent helpers. They are also included for fire drill checks, along with any younger siblings.

The staff are very safety conscious and the children learn to keep themselves safe while in the setting. They complete fire drills very conscientiously and know why they must leave the building immediately the bell or the whistle sound. The children wait patiently while the register is completed. Some drills are completed in conjunction with the school, however, the group completes a fire drill each day of the week chosen, to ensure all staff and children have experience. Fire equipment and electrical appliances are serviced annually.

Children are well supervised in the setting. Staff move around to ensure the children are not left alone in the playroom or outside and that sufficient staff are with them. A very good ratio is maintained with parental support available to help with snack or activities. Parents know they must not have unsupervised access to the children nor visit the toilets when children are present.

Equipment is well maintained. Toys and resources are stored on shelves or in drawers and are easily and safely available for children to help themselves. Staff regularly clean and check the toys, removing items if necessary for repair or disposal. The children know they must use toys with care, and do not throw or grab things from each other. They pick up things when they are dropped and help to clear away when asked to do so.

Children are protected well as the staff have a good understanding of the local child protection procedures although the policies have not been updated to take account of recent changes, such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The procedure to follow if allegations are made against staff is also not correct. A missing child procedure is included in the child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

All the children attending the group are over three years of age and most have funded places. Staff take account of the children's development needs when planning their activities but at times the children do not have enough challenge. The group is very well equipped and has a wide range of resources.

Most children leave their parents happily, keen to see what is on offer for the session, and are comfortable with the staff who know them well. Relationships between staff and children, and the children and their peers, are good. They communicate well and are developing friendships. New children are included in activities and encouraged to participate by other children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage but are only in the early stages of developing planning, assessments and monitoring procedures to ensure the children are making good progress through the stepping stones. The children are all at different stages and staff take account of these when planning activities and their expectations of them.

The children select resources and activities independently, apart from some focussed activities led by staff. Most of the children concentrate well and complete the tasks they have chosen. They happily ask for assistance if they need it. During the Rising Five session children are expected to do more focussed work to prepare them for sitting down in school, however, during

the other sessions they sometimes lack purpose as the activities do not always present sufficient challenge to engage their attention.

The children speak confidently in a group, listening to others and through conversation are developing their vocabulary well. Staff encourage them to think by asking open-ended questions. The children enjoy stories, both read by staff to the group and when looking at books themselves. They use books correctly and carefully. They know books can also provide information. The comfortable quiet corner is much enjoyed and children sit together to look at books independently and also with staff. Most children recognise their names although there are few opportunities to do so during the day, nor are they expected to write them. Some of the older children do however, write their names recognisably on their work. They are developing a good sense of their individuality, being aware of the differences between them as people and their families, some having siblings some not.

Children have produced some very creative work including imaginative models and attractive hand print flowers, which are displayed on the wall. One child made a telescope, and a pair of binoculars for a friend, the game then developed into a dragon's den, then a treasure island which they visited with magic wings to find hidden chocolate, located by means of a treasure map. The telescope and binoculars were made with cardboard tubes and a number of different fixings were tried, until a suitable one was found. The children were aware that by reversing the telescope things became smaller rather than larger.

The children are developing their knowledge of technology well by the use of the group laptop and also the music centre, both of which they use independently. All the children enjoy baking, using play dough and cutting and sticking. They are developing good control of scissors and implements, successfully cutting out shapes and patterns.

Children's mathematical development is satisfactory. They are able to count and are starting to develop an understanding of number although counting is not promoted during general activities during the session. Some of the children can count very well and recognise more complicated shapes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children are settled and comfortable with the staff and their peers. They behave well, having a clear understanding of the house rules, sharing, taking turns and co-operating when playing. The older ones offer advice or help to younger or new children, such as when using the lap top and the cassette recorder for the first time. They are learning right from wrong, and are developing good manners, with staff providing good role models. A comprehensive behaviour policy is made available to parents and includes a bullying procedure. Staff are proactive and prevent this taking hold by early intervention should they be concerned.

Staff support the inclusion of all children and families in the group through the equal opportunities policy. Children from different ethnic groups, cultures and religions are welcome. Some have English as a second language and steps are taken to ensure parents can understand the procedures in the group and feel included. Staff respect the cultures and customs of the families who attend and through activities help all the children develop a good awareness of diversity. A wide range of resources including books, dressing up clothes and musical instruments is used to widen their knowledge. Craft and baking activities also provide learning opportunities

when celebrating festivals, for example, children recently celebrated Chinese New Year and St George's Day.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are successfully included in the group. They have individual learning plans to foster their development and support from both the staff and the children, who have learned sign language to aid communication. The staff have undertaken training to ensure they can meet the needs of the children in the setting and receive help and guidance from the local authority inclusion workers. Children are monitored to help them settle and develop confidence in the setting.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Although they do not receive much initial information about the Foundation Stage, key workers keep them informed about their children's development. Information about the activity programme and long term planning is displayed for them to see. A well produced introductory brochure and letter, containing information about the setting and some policies and procedures, are circulated to interested parents. They complete registration and permission forms, and also a sheet with detail of their children's abilities, likes and dislikes, when they start to attend. This is used as the first page of each child's 'Special Book', an on-going record of the child's achievements in the group, with samples of work and photographs. Parents can access these books at any time and make comments about their child's progress.

Parents are welcome to join the committee and also do rota duties to assist with activities and prepare the snack. A duty letter is given to each parent so they know what is expected of them. The group is supported by fund raising activities throughout the year.

The parents spoken to during the inspection are very happy with the care and support their children receive. They know how to make complaints should they wish to do so but would mention their concerns to staff as a first step. One parent expressed concern about a child, but felt comfortable in approaching the staff. All the parents value the work staff undertake and activities they provide. They feel welcome in the group and enjoy their rota visits.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is being fostered as they learn about the differences between them, and their backgrounds. Through celebration of festivals and customs they are learning about how other people live and to have positive attitudes to those often discriminated against. They are also learning right from wrong in their play and how they relate to each other. Relationships between the children are very good and the staff provide good role models to help them develop good manners and to treat each other with respect.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust systems are in place for the employment of new staff and an effective induction procedure is implemented, to ensure staff have a clear understanding of their roles. Staff work together very well as a team. They know their roles and responsibilities and ensure children are well supported and supervised. They know they share responsibility for the safety of everyone on the premises. Students are accepted from the local college, but do not have unsupervised access to the children. They are made very welcome and given excellent opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding. Pre-school staff are encouraged to participate in training to foster their own personal development and to further improve the practice in the setting. Most staff have current first aid certificates.

The certificate is displayed on the wall and the conditions of registration respected. The comprehensive policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and are readily available to parents, as an easy to read and understand document. The child protection policy and procedure has not however, been updated to include the recent changes. A complaints procedure is included and a record of concerns or complaints maintained. Parents also have access to the complaints box anonymously.

Documentation is in place to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, with parents able to readily access their children's records. Confidentiality is respected and documents stored securely in the office.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and provide a wide range of learning opportunities for the children, however, they are still developing effective monitoring procedures to ensure children are making good progress through the stepping stones. They use the weekly staff meetings to finalise plans for the next week and to exchange information about children's development with the key workers. They provide an encouraging environment but do not always provide sufficient challenge for the more able children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection staff were asked to develop a procedure to ensure persons who have not been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau do not have unsupervised access to the children. To protect the children they monitor any visitors very closely, by ensuring a member of staff is in the room at all times watching their interaction with the 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 may 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 the child protection procedures take account of recent changes, and the procedure for allegations made against staff is clarified.

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 opportunities for children to develop their physical and balancing skills on a regular basis
- develop the monitoring of children's progress to ensure they have activities with sufficient challenge.

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