



Grappenhall Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315220
Inspection date	13 March 2007
Inspector	Joan Isabel Madden
Setting Address	GYCA, Bellhouse Lane, Grappenhall, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 2SG
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Registered person	Grappenhall 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?

Grappenhall Pre-School opened in 1972 and serves the local area. It is managed by a committee and operates from the main assembly room on the ground floor of the community centre in the village of Grappenhall, Warrington. The pre-school also makes use of the toilet facilities and prep room that are adjacent to the main room. There is a secure outdoor play area.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are 56 children on roll from two years seven months to four years five months and of these 28 are funded for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with disabilities.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.05 to 11.35, Monday to Friday and from 12.15 to 14.45 on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

During the summer term there are 'Ready for School' sessions held on a Wednesday and Friday afternoon.

A total of 10 part-time staff work with the children. Of these, seven of the staff have an early years qualification to National Vocational Qualification level 2 or 3 and one member of staff with a level 2 is working towards a level 3 qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from Warrington Sure Start Early Years and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Effective procedures are followed by the staff to protect the children from illness and infection. The room is clean and well maintained. Adults clean up throughout the session when necessary. For example, water and messy play spillages are dealt with efficiently. Staff follow routines, such as wiping down the tables with antibacterial spray before snack to prevent the spread of infection. Staff have qualifications in food hygiene and are conscientious in preparing food to ensure it does not pose a health risk. Children understand the need for simple good health and hygiene practices. They wash hands before eating and as part of the toileting routine. Documentation relating to the seeking of emergency medical treatment, accidents and medication is correctly maintained helping to underpin sensible procedures.

Generally nutritious food and discussion promotes the children's good health. Through the 'garden' theme children are learning about healthy foods and where they come from. However, on the day of inspection children have biscuits for snacks that lack nutritional value. On other days fruit and savoury snacks, such as toast are offered. Children are able to access drinking water from the water jug at all times, helping them to appreciate the healthy way of remaining hydrated; additionally they are offered milk to drink at snack time. Children have their health and dietary needs met because staff work well with parents. Staff record the children's dietary needs onto 'medico alert' forms that are available to all the staff. This results in them being fully aware of the children's dietary needs and are conscientious in ensuring these are met.

Daily routines include activities to help children develop physical skills, widen their boundaries and develop a healthy lifestyle. Children have good opportunities for physical activity both indoors and outdoors. Children regularly play outside, where they have good opportunities to run around using lots of energy and are able to take risks within a safe environment. There is a range of toys available to the children to help them enjoy the outdoors and to develop their physical skills. Children develop their co-ordination skills on good quality wheeled toys. The main room provides ample space for children to move around and develop their physical skills on large equipment. The slide with steps enables children to practise their climbing and balancing skills. In inclement weather the children take part in indoor physical activities. They enjoy 'The bean game' that involves the children moving in different ways. Children new to the pre-school are given encouragement and support by the staff to help them settle and feel secure. Children are learning self-help skills. For example, they are encouraged to put on and take off their coats and hang them up. They can relax and rest in the quiet reading area if required.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome in clean and organised premises which are suitable for their purpose. The temperature of the room is easily controlled as new thermostats have been fitted to radiators ensuring the children's comfort. The room is bright and stimulating with displays reflecting children's recent experiences. Space is organised to meet children's needs including a reading area, role play area, creative area and table top activities. The furniture, toys and equipment are reasonably well maintained, safe and clean, helping to protect the children's well-being. If an item was thought to be hazardous it would be removed immediately. The pre-school is well equipped to promote all areas of learning. Children are able to access resources themselves helping to develop their confidence and decision making skills.

Generally there are good processes in place to keep the children safe. The premises are secure indoors and outdoors. Safety mats surround the physical development equipment and low-level glass is covered with safety film. Children, staff and visitors are recorded as they enter and leave the building. Parents give written permission for nominated people to pick their children up. Staff carry out a comprehensive annual risk assessment where issues are recorded and action is taken. However, there are no written daily risk assessments in place and although staff carry out daily safety checks, less experienced staff or parent helpers may not be aware of this, thereby compromising the children's safety. Staff analyse children's accident records and if they notice a trend they take action to reduce particular types of accidents. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they take part in fire drills and are reminded of sensible rules, such as going up the slide ladders with both hands free of toys.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in safeguarding children and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. The procedures for reporting concerns about children's welfare are in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Staff are reminded of their responsibilities during meetings and any new guidelines or legislation are cascaded down to them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is a real sense of community in the pre-school making the transition between home and pre-school a smooth one for the children. They are confident, happy and settled and quickly become engrossed in activities that enable them to acquire new knowledge and skills. The children are able to choose from a broad range of activities helping to promote their independence. They enjoy exploring a good range of play materials including painting, chalking, reading area, mark making, small world play and construction. Children enjoy taking part in role play helping to develop their imaginative skills. Staff have recently attended training courses in the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They are linking activities and learning outcomes to the framework but this is not yet reflected in the written plans. In the main the children are bright and articulate who cope well with pre-school. Individuals who are new to the group and lack confidence are well supported by the staff helping them to settle and take part in activities. Staff ensure the young children have plenty of opportunity to talk about their experiences and get to know the staff well.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning, assessments and staff interaction with the children demonstrate that staff have a secure knowledge of the early learning goals. Staff are encouraging and consistent thus creating a positive learning environment for the children. At the close of the session staff ask the children to recall what they have done to clarify their experiences and thinking. For example, in getting them to recall the seed planting activity, staff consolidate the children's knowledge of how to grow plants. During story time children are asked open-ended questions to keep them focussed and assess their understanding of the story and the concepts involved. Short-term planning comprehensively covers all six areas of learning and links to the stepping stones. Observations of the children are transferred onto individual assessment records giving an overview of the children's achievements and progress towards the early learning goals. In the summer term there are extra afternoon sessions called 'Ready for School' that help to prepare the older children for school.

Children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing well. Children talk about events in their lives as they play. They listen well to stories in whole groups and throughout the sessions staff share story books with the children helping them to handle books and develop reading skills. Children make independent use of the inviting range of books that are easily accessible. They listen to a story called 'Oliver's vegetables' and know 'vegetables' are the collective noun for carrots, peas and so on. Children are able to name fruit and vegetables and drinks that are good for them. The older, more able children initiate writing their names and are able to sound out the letters as they do. Individual children go on to demonstrate that they know all the letter sounds of the alphabet. As children write their names on Mother's Day cards they are learning there are different purposes for writing. Children recognise their names on the whiteboard learning that print carries meaning.

Through activities and daily routines the children are developing their mathematical skills. They enjoy playing dice games that promote their counting, matching and calculation skills. Children confidently complete a computer program that encourages them to count how many cabbages the caterpillar has eaten and how many are left. In completing puzzles children learn how shapes fit together. The older, more able children demonstrate that they recognise number symbols to 10 and can count up to 10 and beyond. As the children line up to go out to play the children count the line up to 18 and then the number of adults. They are able to compare numbers and know there are more children than adults. Number friezes around the room help the children to become aware of number order and symbols.

Through topics the children are increasing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They enjoy planting seeds as part of the 'Garden' theme and in doing so are developing their knowledge of how things grow. In the 'garden centre' children happily experiment with compost, pots and seeds. As children become involved in role play and small world scenes it helps them to make sense of the wider world. They develop their design and making skills by building with construction kits. Children have good opportunities to develop their creative skills both in child-initiated and adult-led activities. They enjoy painting, drawing and chalking. Examples of their works are displayed around the room signalling to children that their work is valued. As part of the 'Chinese New Year' theme children produced some detailed observational drawings

of 'Chinese blossom trees'. They explore different textures as they mould with play dough and play in water and sand.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff demonstrate a sound awareness of equal opportunities, learning difficulties and disability issues. There are good staff to child ratios, however, there is no key person system in place restricting how staff cater for individual needs. Children are warmly greeted by staff who are interested in what the children have to say. They are very well supported in their chosen activities, helping to extend their learning and acquisition of skills. Birthdays are celebrated helping children to feel a sense of belonging. Children gain an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others as they celebrate different festivals. They play with resources that reflect equal opportunities enabling them to gain a wider view of the world. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are welcomed into the pre-school, where they are well supported and appropriate guidance and support is given to the staff by other professionals.

Children are well behaved. They follow the pre-school routine and know there is appropriate behaviour for different situations. They sit at the tables at snack time and this encourages them to develop their social and language skills. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and remind the children of the rules. Individuals who find it difficult to conform, for example, sitting quietly at story time are supported by a member of staff and gently reminded of the expectations. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are involved in the running of the pre-school through the committee and volunteering at sessions. Parents on the rota gain a good insight into their children's life at pre-school. They see how children are settling, how they integrate, and their engagement in activities. Staff create a welcoming atmosphere and parents find the staff approachable. Generally children are cared for by staff who work well with parents to meet individual children's needs and ensure that they are included fully in the life of the setting. Parents speak highly of the staff and the pre-school. They are provided with information about the setting and its provision through displayed information, letters, policies and procedures. However, although children bring home work from the pre-school the system for informing parents of their children's progress is weak. The required complaints procedure is in place but lacks detail.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. Senior staff are good role models and set a very professional tone. They work directly with the children and as part of the team and, therefore, are able to monitor provision and activities on a daily basis. The committee have modified an appraisal system that is approved by the Pre-school Learning Alliance but this is not yet implemented. Appraisals will set objectives for the year and identify training needs. Staff are confident, secure in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage, enthusiastic and conscientious. This contributes positively to children's progress towards the early learning goals.

Organisation is good, resulting in positive outcomes for children. Staff have a good understanding of the conditions of their registration and how to meet the standards. They have a secure knowledge of how to vet staff to ensure that children are well protected. Good adult to child ratios and staff deployment contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Records, policies and procedures work in practice to underpin the good care of the children. Children follow a sensible routine that includes a free-play session, outdoor play, snacks, adult-led activity, registration time and story time. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, staff were to ensure there is at least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate on duty at all times and to update the written complaints procedure to include the address and telephone number of Ofsted. The majority of staff are now qualified in first aid and there is always a member of staff on duty who is qualified in first aid. The written complaints procedure does include the address and telephone number of Ofsted and the official poster is displayed.

At the last education inspection, there were no significant weaknesses to report but consideration was to be given to improving planning, to include differentiation in activities to take account of different levels of ability and to provide more opportunities for children to show an interest in information and communication technology (ICT). Foundation Stage planning now takes into account different levels of ability and appropriate learning outcomes to match the children's abilities. This is colour-coded so staff can easily identify who the learning outcomes relate to. A laptop is now available to the children throughout the sessions and they confidently work on programs to promote their ICT skills and learning.

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 complaint 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):

- improve documentation in relation to risk assessments and the complaints system
- further develop planning for the children under three years to link in more clearly with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

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 an effective procedure through a key person system for informing parents of their children's progress (also applies to care)
- implement the newly devised system for appraising staff in order to set objectives and identify the training needs of the staff.

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