



Tugboats Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315253
Inspection date	27 February 2007
Inspector	Joan Isabel Madden
Setting Address	Quays Community Centre, 233 Thelwall New Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 2XT
Telephone number	01925 497580
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Registered person	Committee of Tugboats 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?

Tugboats Pre-School opened in September 1997. It operates from a small community room with its own secure entrance in The Quays Community Centre, Grappenhall, Warrington. The pre-school is managed by a committee and serves the local area.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 52 children on roll from two and a half years to four years. Of these, 40 children are receiving nursery funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:00 to 14:30.

A total of five part-time staff work with the children, all of whom are qualified to National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Childcare. The setting receives support from Warrington Sure Start Early Years.

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 premises are regularly inspected by Environmental Health Services to ensure they meet their requirements. The room is clean and well maintained. Staff follow routines, such as wiping down the tables with anti bacterial spray before and after snack and meal times to prevent the spread of infection. They have checklists in place to ensure cleaning routines are followed, for example, the fridge is cleaned and drinking cups are sterilised at the end of each week. 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, and are able to explain that it is to prevent germs from spreading. Children are treated appropriately for minor injuries, as the majority of staff are qualified in first aid and there is a fully stocked first aid box. Documentation relating to the seeking of emergency medical treatment, accidents and medication is correctly maintained helping to underpin sensible procedures.

Nutritious food and discussion promotes the children's good health. Through the present topic of 'Healthy Living' they are learning about nutritious foods. They confidently name items of food that are good to eat and know that sweets and chocolate contain sugar and fat. In the role play area there is a 'shop' that is stocked with 'healthy foods' helping to consolidate the children's knowledge of what is good for them. The children are provided with nutritious snacks that include fruit, raw vegetables and savoury snacks. They are able to access drinking water from the fountain at all times, helping them to appreciate the healthy way of remaining hydrated; they are offered milk to drink at snack time. Children have their health and dietary needs met because the staff work well with parents. Staff are fully aware of the children's dietary needs and are conscientious in ensuring these are met. Children sit at tables during snack time to develop good hygiene routines and promote their social and self-help skills as they chat, share food and pour their own drinks.

Daily routines include activities to help children develop their physical skills, widen their boundaries, and develop a healthy life style. They benefit from playing outside at every session, where they have good opportunities to run around, letting off energy and to take risks within a safe environment. There is a range of toys available to the children to encourage them to enjoy the outdoors. Children are suitably challenged to promote their physical skills. They are taught to throw and catch and develop their coordination skills on good quality wheeled toys. Children practise their balancing skills as they walk across a beam.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

In the main, children feel welcome in clean and organised premises which are suitable for purpose. The room is bright and stimulating with displays reflecting children's recent experiences. Displays around the room reflect the recent theme of 'Favourite Books'. However, the temperature of the room is low at times. Cloakroom facilities are limited, as the coat pegs are out of the children's reach. This hampers the children's opportunities to develop self-help skills. The pre-school is well equipped to promote all areas of learning. The furniture, toys and equipment are well maintained, safe and clean, helping to protect the children's well-being. There is a system for recording defective equipment and if an item was thought to be hazardous it would be removed immediately.

There are good processes established to keep children safe and no safety issues have been identified. Risk assessments are in place and the inside and outside are checked each morning against the risk assessment before children arrive. The premises are secure both indoors and outdoors. The children are cared for by adults who are vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills. Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff explain the reasons for practices, such as not rocking on their chairs.

In the main 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.

The children benefit from a stimulating, structured and caring environment. The younger children are well supported by the understanding staff helping them to feel secure and safe in their new surroundings. Individuals who find it difficult to settle benefit from staying close to a member of staff who gently encourages and reassures them. Throughout the whole session children and staff interact, helping the children to develop language skills, gain the confidence to play independently and access resources for themselves. They enjoy exploring a good range of play materials including painting, printing, exploring textures, construction, play dough, sand and water play. Through listening to stories, songs and rhymes the young children are exploring and experimenting with sounds. Children enjoy taking part in role play, helping to develop their imaginative skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children happily follow a routine that includes child-initiated and adult-led activities, outdoor play and whole group activities. All staff are confident and able to contribute or lead the large group sessions. Activities, assessments and the staff interaction with the children demonstrate that the staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. All staff contribute to planning and this helps to develop their

knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. The medium term planning links clearly to the six areas of learning and stepping stones but short-term planning takes a different format and is not as comprehensive. This makes it less clear how it links in with the stepping stones and what the learning intentions are. Observations on the children are transferred onto individual assessment records and the overview sheet is regularly completed giving a clear picture of children's achievements and progress.

Staff are positive, calm and give the children reasons for doing things. They promote children's learning by asking good open-ended questions and teach them new concepts and vocabulary. Two sessions a week are dedicated to a 'Rising Five' session where the older more able children are challenged further. There is separate planning for these sessions. High priority is put upon the children developing their concentration and self-help skills in preparation for school. They are learning to write and recognise their own names, recognise numbers and count. Children are making their own healthy booklet and this involves cutting, sticking, writing and colouring.

Children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing well. They are encouraged to develop their listening skills and follow instructions, for example, staff may say, 'Choose a friend and go and sit on the yellow table'. As staff read stories they ask open-ended questions to encourage the children to listen and understand the story. Throughout the session staff encourage children to talk about events in their lives to help them recall and order past experiences. Printed words around the room help children to associate print with meaning. Children enjoy joining in with rhymes such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' and 'Jelly on a Plate', helping them to show an awareness of rhyme and alliteration.

Through regular routines and activities children are learning mathematical skills. They join in with the familiar routine of choosing and naming a shape and its colour before putting it on the counting frame to register themselves. Children are able to recognise rectangles, circles, squares, pentagons, hexagons and triangles. They count the sides of the shapes learning about their characteristics. Children sing number rhymes such as, 'One Potato, Two Potatoes', 'Five Little Peas in a Pea Pod Press' and 'Five Juicy Apples' helping to promote their counting and calculation skills.

Through the current topic of 'Healthy Living' children are exploring different foods and learning to recognise their benefits and disadvantages. They confidently name fruits and vegetables and explore their textures and shapes as they take part in a printing activity. They work at their own levels with some children being very methodical and making patterns whilst others mix in colours and shapes. They all enjoy experimenting and exploring. Whilst observing fruit on display the children are encouraged to draw their own fruit and to make fruit shapes with play dough. The children learn about people in the community and their roles, for example, in connection with the current theme, a dentist visits to inform the children how to maintain healthy teeth. However, the children have limited opportunities to develop their skills in information and communication technology.

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 and an effective key worker system in operation, enabling staff to meet the children's individual needs more effectively. 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. Snacks often link in to promote children's awareness of other cultures. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are welcomed into the pre-school, where appropriate guidance and support is given to the staff by the local authority.

The children are very well behaved. The positive behaviour policy is effectively implemented with good strategies to promote acceptable behaviour. The staff have high expectations of the children's behaviour. Children are expected to help tidy up at the end of activities and are reminded to keep the noise down when the level gets too high. They line up before going out to play, sit quietly and still during registration and put their hands up before speaking in large group. The children are valued and encouraged. Staff thank them for helping and behaving appropriately. 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. Children are cared for by the 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 nursery. They are provided with good quality information about the setting and its provision through displayed information, policies and procedures. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress through discussions and written reports. There is a key worker system established that effectively keeps parents informed about their children. This helps to provide continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Through a clear management structure staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. 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. The manager works directly with the children and as part of the team, which enables them to continuously monitor the provision, staff and activities. Staff evaluate children's progress by observing them and transferring observations onto an overview sheet to identify any gaps in their learning. Excellent staff reviews and appraisals are carried out and the training needs of the staff are identified and

addressed. Staff receive visits from the local authority advisors and respond quickly to any issues raised.

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. Group sizes, a key worker system and staff deployment contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Children follow a sensible routine that includes a free play session, snacks, adult-led activity, group discussion time, singing and story time. Generally documentation works in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. However, issues have been identified relating to the complaints procedure and safeguarding children procedure. 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 required to ensure toys were freely accessible for children and improve documentation. A wide range of toys and materials are available to children throughout the session helping them to develop their confidence and decision making skills. The attendance record is correctly maintained including times of children's arrival and departure.

At the last education inspection the staff were required to improve resources in literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. There is an inviting and comfortable reading area set up for the children where they have many opportunities to handle books. This results in them confidently sharing their favourite stories, demonstrating an appreciation of books and how to handle them. Using appropriate resources children are given good opportunities to explore and investigate, for example, in a recent topic they discovered why ice melts and water freezes. This helps to promote their knowledge and understanding of the world.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 room is maintained at an adequate temperature and make the premises more welcoming by providing suitable storage facilities for coats and bags
- improve documentation in relation to: safeguarding children and complaints procedure.

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):

- further develop short term planning to link in more clearly with the stepping stones to identify the learning outcomes for the children
- provide the children with more opportunities in information and communication technology.

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