



Harpole Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220144
Inspection date	10 January 2007
Inspector	Sheila Dawn Flounders
Setting Address	Old School Hall, School Lane, Harpole, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN7 4DR
Telephone number	0780 8239909
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Registered person	Harpole 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?

Harpole Pre-School is a committee run, sessional group which opened in 1974. It operates from the Old School Hall in the centre of the village of Harpole. A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. The nursery is open from 09.00 to 13.00 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday; from 09.00 to 12.00 on Tuesday morning and from 12.30 to 15.30 on Tuesday afternoon and Thursday afternoon during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 28 children from two years six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the pre-school serves the local area.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Local Authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have very good opportunities for physical play, with the large outdoor area used most days and alternative provision available inside if necessary. Children greatly enjoy the time they spend outside, enthusiastically engaging in role play activities based on the playhouse and using their imagination to develop the current theme, for example, building with boxes. They develop physical skills as they use the wide variety of equipment available and enjoy learning how to use new items, such as the basketball hoop. This good access to fresh air and exercise ensures that children learn about healthy living with staff reinforcing its importance by joining in the activities with the children.

All of the children understand the need for simple health and hygiene practices, they automatically go over independently to wash their hands after messy play and when using the toilet, where they use liquid soap and individual paper towels. They are able to access tissues and throw them in the bin after use and they always keep their cups and drinks cartons on the table tops. They also wash their hands before eating, but do so in shared water which could spread infection. However, children generally stay healthy because there are other measures in place to prevent this, for example, tables are cleaned before they are used for food, the premises is cleaned daily and a robust nappy changing procedure is in place. Parents are all made aware of the comprehensive sickness policy which includes an exclusion period after illness and asks for open wounds to be covered. Children do not have medication in the setting, unless for an allergy or life-threatening condition with appropriate documentation and secure storage available. They do not rest or sleep during the session, unless they become unwell, although parents do make staff aware of changes to their routine which may affect how tired they are and take them home early if necessary.

Children are well nourished due to the healthy snacks which the setting provides each session, with a varied menu available, which is stored and prepared in keeping with food hygiene procedures. Parents currently provide food for those who have lunch, which is served by the children themselves. Drinks are available for most of the session, with older children encouraged to serve themselves from the jug. All the children are given a choice between milk and water to ensure they are sufficiently hydrated. In the warmer weather additional drinks are taken into the outside area. Children have their health and dietary needs met because the setting works with parents to establish what they are and a daily check for allergies is made of those attending.

The physical development of those children in receipt of early education is good. They are confident in their movement both indoors and outside and safely negotiate around each other and the equipment when using wheeled toys or running. They are able to control the tricycles and scooters as they ride around, including following the roadway around the playground. They have good opportunities to practise a variety of physical skills, for example, kicking a football,

throwing a smaller ball into the basketball hoop, climbing up onto the climbing frame or balancing on the beam. All the funded children demonstrate good spatial awareness and are able to find a space to sit in or form a circle easily. They discuss with staff which foods are healthy and older children think about the changes that happen to their bodies after physical activities. Funded children use a variety of small equipment daily, showing increasing control in their use of items such as scissors, paintbrushes, glue spreaders, malleable materials and a knife to spread their own food at snack time. They also access a varied range of large equipment including cardboard boxes, space hoppers, wheeled toys and a trampoline to develop their large muscles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The space within the premises is used appropriately to promote safety, with staff vigilant about keeping the room door closed, a gate used to prevent access to the kitchen and children always supervised when using the toilets. The main room used has been made warm and welcoming to children and parents with many posters and displays of children's work adorning the walls and laid out with separate areas for differing activities so that the children know where to find things. The premises are very secure with external doors locked between arrival and departure times and double gates into the outside area to prevent unauthorised access. The outside area has been refurbished with children's safety in mind, with bark under one play area and a safety surface in another. Thus, children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and mainly safe environment which is demonstrated by the minor nature of the accidents that occur. These are always correctly recorded and shared with parents and most of the staff are qualified in first aid so that appropriate treatment is given.

Children use suitable and safe equipment as the setting are aware of most potential risks and have put some measures in place to combat these, for example, there are no trailing wires and items not suitable for self selection are kept out of reach of the children. Staff are vigilant about the children's safety during activities, for example, reminding all the children to stand back before they knocked over a high tower of boxes. General resources are checked to ensure they are suitable for the varying ages of children attending, although electrical equipment has not been tested recently. The setting have a basic risk assessment in place, but it does not consider all of the activities undertaken and is only reviewed once a year.

Children are kept safe on outings, which are usually only local walks in the village or an annual trip when they are taken by their parents. Necessary permissions are gained and ratios are at a suitable level to ensure the children are constantly supervised. Children learn to protect themselves as they regularly practise the emergency evacuation drill, particularly shortly after new children start the setting. The building has adequate escape routes and fire fighting equipment, although there is not always a member of staff working who knows how to use the extinguishers. Children are further protected because the staff understand their role in safeguarding children and know what basic procedures to put in place when necessary, this information is also available to parents. However, they are less clear about what to do if an allegation was made about one of them, or a volunteer, as this is not covered in their procedures. Parents who help during the session are given some information about the types of things they

can do during their time in the setting, but it does not include things not to do, for example, not to accompany children to the toilet.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem as they are encouraged to select resources for themselves from the activities laid out according to the planning, but they are also able to get out additional items which they often play with on the mat area of the floor. They show curiosity and interest in what they are doing, for example, children eagerly lift the flaps during a story to see what is underneath or try fitting various parts into Mr. Potato Head's body to see which will fit. Younger children are able to join in the same activities as the older children, but at an appropriate level, with topics chosen that are suitable for all ages. The planning has separate learning intentions for them in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and they respond satisfactorily to the challenge which the staff provide. Although the plans do not indicate how the activities are adapted for them when necessary. They are all able to use their own initiative to develop activities according to their ideas, for example, a two-year-old decided to pile the small boxes on top of the large box, instead of putting them inside as an older child was doing and then the older child began to do the same. All children have good relationships with the staff and approach them readily to ask questions, for example, as to why the microwave would not work, or to get support to build a higher tower than they can reach alone. They acquire new knowledge and skills because the staff are skilled at listening to what is happening, then posing challenging questions to make children think. Staff provide just enough input when showing children how to do something or joining in alongside them that they will be able to do the activity with more independence the next time. They are all aware of the differing abilities of the younger children and offer them more support than the older children need.

The quality of teaching and learning for those in receipt of early education is good. The current staff have a varied knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Senior staff are very experienced whilst those newer to the setting are just beginning to understand how all the areas of learning link together and what the children will learn from the activities provided each day. They are all involved in the planning, with short term plans developed weekly to react to what the children have been doing and to pick up any learning intentions that were not fully covered the week before. The planning contains most of the elements needed to make it effective, although often on different documents, and includes a good weekly evaluation of the main activities and what needs to be developed next. However, it does not show how the planned activities can be adapted for children of differing abilities so it is left to the individual skill of staff to provide challenge for the older or more able children. Staff use a variety of methods with the children, often involving small group or individual activities and a brief period together at the beginning and end of the session, with very good story telling taking place at times. They ensure that children are familiar with the boundaries of the activities each day and consistently encourage and praise them when they achieve something or behave well. This positive approach to behaviour management is rewarded with a generally good response from the children and a calm and happy atmosphere within the group. Staff organise the space and resources effectively so that children are able to choose from accessible storage, see good visual information around them and have freedom to move easily between activities. Routines

are clear and sessions run very smoothly. A variety of assessments are used to track children's progress, with the evaluation of activities and information from targeted observations used to identify gaps in learning. However, not all of the information collected is retained in the profiles so that it is not always clear where the child's progress has come from and insufficient information is obtained from parents when children enter the Foundation Stage to enable secure starting points to be identified.

The children in receipt of early education are confident, interested in activities and motivated to learn. They are able to take the lead in activities, work together for a common purpose and concentrate for long periods, becoming engrossed particularly in stories, role play situations and creative activities. They have good opportunities to be independent, for example, pouring from the jug or spreading their own cream cheese at snack time. They are able to wait their turn, share equipment and resources with each other and are beginning to be self-disciplined, for example, automatically getting aprons for creative activities or throwing their rubbish into the bin. They have a sense of themselves within the community as they take part in local events, for example, the village scarecrow festival or a visit from the fire crew and they freely talk about their homes and families.

Children communicate well, with conversations taking place at all activities. They talk confidently to staff or other adults about what they are doing, for example, what colours they are going to use or what shapes they have. They are able to listen and respond to instructions, for example, to tidy up or get ready for outdoor play. Activities are provided which give children opportunities to extend their language and thinking, for example, they consider what they might like to be when they grow up and they model language they have heard during role play. They greatly enjoy stories and handle books correctly and with care, including a wide range of fact and fiction. They are able to make realistic suggestions about what is happening in stories they are familiar with, for example, 'The three little pigs'. Children have access to print all around them and they are beginning to recognise some of it, with older children confidently recognising their own names and able to recognise the initial letter sound in other words. Many of the children attempt to write their own names independently and they are all able to successfully trace over their names each week. Other mark making opportunities are provided inside and outside, for example, with chalk, water and a brush, with children always encouraged to try and name their own creative work. They all hold a pencil correctly and many use correctly formed letters.

Children have regular opportunities to practise their counting skills up to a maximum of 16, with group counting taking place at least twice each session along with a look at the numerals of the date. Younger children confidently recognise numbers to five, with some of the older children confident to ten, and they are able to match the correct numeral to the number of objects that they have, for example, when carrying eggs in a basket. They solve mathematical problems in games, for example, matching numbers in dominoes, sorting compare bears according to size, colour or weight, or working out how much wrapping paper is needed to cover a parcel. They use language such as tall when building, talk of empty and full when playing with sand or positional language when using the remote Beebot. All of the children experience pattern, for example, when doing jigsaws or playing 'Connect 4' and they are introduced to simple addition and subtraction through number rhymes.

Children have good opportunities to explore and investigate, for example, measuring the wind speed outside, playing with a variety of boxes to discover which will fit through a slot, or getting glue and glitter on their hands and then describing what it feels like. They experience living things when growing bulbs or a grass hedgehog, when various animals visit the setting and by helping to care for the goldfish. They examine how things work, such as magnets on the construction, or question as to why things do not work as they expect them to. They are curious about all the things around them and ask questions of staff to find out what they want to know. Children are confident users of technology, with the computer used for most of the session and good mouse control demonstrated. They are also able to programme the Beebot to follow their instructions and move in the directions they want. They are aware of what day it is and easily talk about events from the recent past. Children make use of the immediate outside environment on a daily basis, they also go for frequent walks in the village and discuss various issues of the natural world in topics throughout the year. They are currently focussing particularly on their homes, making three dimensional models for a display of the village. They learn about their own culture and that of others through activities in connection with the festivals of Christmas, harvest, Easter, Diwali and Hanukkah and by listening to stories.

Children have access to a variety of creative activities. They have a messy activity such as painting or modelling each session and use a wide range of textures and materials, for example, feathers, glitter, straws, powder paint, clay, foam or dough. They experience mixing and changes to ingredients when cooking, they experiment with painting on their hands and they use their imaginations to produce many free style paintings as well as those linked to the current themes. They sing most days and were able to learn several songs in preparation for their Christmas plays, when they also used musical instruments, although they do not often use them during the rest of the year. Children engage in a variety of role plays on a daily basis both planned and spontaneous, with the home corner area and outside playhouse used for scenarios such as Santa's workshop, a restaurant and a vet's surgery, although these do not always provide children with opportunities to freely access dressing up activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met well, and the setting takes positive steps to welcome those with additional needs. Many of the staff have undergone additional training, for example, on speech and language and Makaton so that they are able to identify and provide suitable activities for children's individual needs. All of the children are confident at making choices for themselves during the sessions and staff are always on hand to lend support, for example, getting the child's choice of paints or more paper from the cupboard. They are able to get their own placemats before eating and decide what type of drink they want. They are encouraged towards independence through self-selection of resources and being given responsibility for their own personal needs, although staff are available to support the younger children. They are welcomed by a member of staff on arrival and all the children, including those fairly new to the setting settle well and have a sense of belonging, quickly getting to know the routines and boundaries. There are lots of displays of the children's work around the room and they take pride in taking things home to share with their families or showing them to the other children. All parents and carers are made welcome in the pre-school and have access to all

policies and procedures, including a suitable complaints procedure. Staff are on hand at the end of the session to discuss what the child has been doing and to share any information on behaviour incidents or accidents.

Children are reminded of some of the basic rules in place at the beginning of each session, for example, to ask an adult with help putting discs in the computer and they are well aware of most of them, even reminding staff at the creative table to put an apron on. Staff give the children lots of praise and encouragement at every opportunity and act as positive role models so that the children behave very well and it is not necessary for reminders about behaviour to be given often. If necessary consistent, appropriate methods are used to deal with any incidents, with significant events recorded and shared with parents. Children get on with each other and interact with a variety of children and adults during each session. The older children are encouraged to be patient with the younger ones and they are all reminded at the beginning of the session that they need to share. They often work in very small groups or individually with staff, which allows them all opportunities to feel special and valued, thus building up their self-esteem. All the children are all well aware of their own needs and confident in expressing them. They become aware of wider society through activities within the local community, attractive displays within the setting and access to a good range of toys and resources that provide them with positive images of culture, gender and disability.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is good. They are provided with a wide range of written information about the setting generally and its educational provision, including information about the curriculum their child is following. They are kept aware of issues such as what the current topic is and who is their child's keyworker. They know that information is kept on their child's achievements and progress and frequently discuss this with the keyworker; although they know where they are kept, most do not currently access their development folders. A basic profile is used when children start the pre-school in which parents share a little of their knowledge about their child and most are able to take the opportunity to attend the setting as parent helpers and share in what their child does during a session. Parents also have other opportunities to be involved in their child's learning, for example, by helping on outings, taking books home to share and filling in the diary when Benjamin Bear comes home for a visit. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The pre-school have due regard for the well-being of the children in their care and ensure that all staff and committee members are fully vetted. They maintain ratios at all times and have ongoing arrangements to induct new staff, provide access to additional relevant training and assess suitability through an appraisal system. Current staff are well qualified and experienced. They organise the premises well to provide a child-centred environment where consideration is given to the ages and abilities of the children attending, although due to limitations of space some of the displays are sited too highly for young children to easily see. Policies and procedures are in place which work to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievements and their positive contribution to the setting, although some require updating in light of recent

changes. The setting maintains all required documentation, usually to a high standard and ensures that everything is stored safely and confidentially. The staff work well together as a team and are fully supported by the committee. Thus, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of early education is good. The committee have developed strong links with the staff. They hold regular meetings and oversee the planning for the funded children. They provide input on the organisation of the group from a parental perspective, for example, suggesting an increase in the detail of the information provided for parents on the notice boards. Internal leadership is also strong, with senior staff clear about what they are trying to do with the children and eager to pass their enthusiasm for learning on to others. They are all aware of the limitations of the premises and have worked to develop the outside area to give more space. Ongoing discussions and the appraisal system allow the group to identify their strengths and weaknesses, which they then seek to improve, for example, by encouraging all staff to attend a variety of training to keep their knowledge and skills updated. Staff are continuing to develop their assessment of the funded children and evaluate their planning weekly to enable them to monitor the provision of nursery education. The committee all spend time in the setting and are able to keep a good overview of the activities that take place and ensure that all children make progress. The setting demonstrate a strong commitment to improvement, for example, in improving the outdoor area and welcome regular visits from the local authority workers to develop and support their education provision.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection the pre-school were asked to make several changes, mainly to update documentation. Since that time they have improved children's safety by maintaining a basic assessment on the premises to minimise identified risks and ensuring that their safeguarding children statement contains all necessary contact information, although it still does not include the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. They have ensured children's continuing health by obtaining written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. All children are able to make a more positive contribution due to the development of the statement on special needs so that it is consistent with current legislation and guidance and the extension of the written statement on behaviour management to include bullying. General organisation has been improved by the development of the operational file showing how the pre-school is organised, according to available resources.

At their last early education inspection the pre-school were asked to make some improvements to their planning and improve opportunities for children to link sounds and letters and solve simple number problems. Since then they have developed their planning so that observations and assessments are used to plan the next stage in learning for all children. They are also increasing the range of opportunities for children to link sounds to letters. Older children are able to consolidate their mathematical skills by solving simple number problems which enables them to make more progress towards the early learning goals.

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 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 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):

- extend the risk assessment to include action taken on identified hazards, and ensure that it is reviewed following significant change
- ensure that children's hand washing routines before eating are sufficient to prevent the spread of infection
- include procedures to be followed in the event of allegations of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer in the safeguarding children statement.

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):

- gather sufficient information about children's ability as they enter the foundation stage to enable progress to be clearly demonstrated
- widen children's creative experience by increasing the access children have to musical instruments and dressing up clothes
- ensure that planning contains differentiation within activities to show how children of all abilities are included.

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