



## Sconce Hills Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	253322
<b>Inspection date</b>	01 February 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Melanie Arnold
<b>Setting Address</b>	Christchurch Hall, Boundary Road, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG24 4AJ
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<b>Registered person</b>	Sconce Hills Pre School Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Sconce Hills Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1966 and is committee run. It operates from Christ Church Hall in Newark. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during term time from 09:15 to 12:00, or from 9:00 to 12:30 for children staying for the lunch time session.

There are currently 23 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area to attend the pre-school.

There are four main staff who work with the children. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted through the implementation of generally good hygiene routines. Clear policies, completed records and up to date staff training in first aid, actively contribute to effectively maintaining children's health and well-being. Children learn some good health and hygiene practices during the daily routine. For example, children visit the toilet and wash their hands before eating snack and they independently wash their hands after messy activities. However, the organisation of snack time and hand washing practices before children eat lunch, is not effective to fully protect children from the spread of germs.

Children are provided with good daily opportunities to experience different physical play experiences during the free play session. For example, children have fun and show skill as they use the balancing beam to balance on, jump off and they show confidence as they climb up the steps to the small slide. Further physical activities are planned towards the end of each session, which helps to promote children's physical development, control and co-ordination. However, planning does not show how individual children are fully challenged to move them on to the next stages of their development. Children show an awareness of space as they negotiate around the room when playing with different resources, dancing to music or when riding the pedal bikes. Organised events like sports days and trips to the park provide children with opportunities to access a wide range of small and large play equipment. This helps to ensure children's all round physical development is promoted. Children's understanding of health issues is beginning to develop through topic work and discussions.

Children benefit from eating a healthy, balanced range of snacks. The setting has a pro-active approach to promoting children's health. For example, they encourage parents to provide their children with healthy options in their lunch box. Staff also encourage children to eat savoury foods before any sweeter options, which helps to effectively promote children's well-being. Fresh drinking water is accessible throughout the session, ensuring children can independently access a drink when needed. Staff are aware of children's dietary requirements, ensuring their needs are met at all times. These practices, contribute to children's growth and development being well promoted.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy playing in a secure environment, where space and resources are well organised to offer children access to a good range of activities. Toys and resources are arranged nicely around the room before children arrive, which helps to create a welcoming environment. Children's safety is well protected because the setting has good procedures in place. For example, daily risk assessments ensure the setting and resources are well maintained, and clear safety and security procedures ensure children are released in to authorised people's care only.

Children are effectively supervised because staff are deployed well, which helps to prevent accidental

injuries. Regular fire evacuation drills are completed with the children, which helps to develop their confidence and understanding of what to do in an emergency situation. Positive steps are taken to promote and protect children when they are on outings. For example, risk assessments show how the setting plans to minimise potential hazards and children wear fluorescent tabards which makes them highly visible to traffic.

Children's welfare is protected and fully safeguarded through staff having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection. A clear child protection policy, detailing contact information for the relevant authorities and relating to current guidance is in place, ensuring referrals can be made without delay to protect children's welfare immediately.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in their environment. Any children who are a little upset, are well supported by staff which enables children to soon settle. Children arrive and confidently select the activities or resources they would most like to play with. They have fun as they engage in a good range of activities each day, which helps to promote all areas of their development. Examples of activities children enjoy include playing with shaving foam, painting, playing in the home corner, reading books, writing and playing on ride on toys. Staff have started to refer to the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning activities for younger children and when observing and assessing younger children's development. This helps to ensure children are making good progress.

#### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a generally good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, which enables children to make sound progress in each area of learning. Planning systems are used to ensure children receive a broad and balanced range of activities, covering the six areas of learning each day. However, although staff do know children quite well, planning lacks information regarding how to challenge individual children, to fully ensure all staff are aware of and consistently challenging the more able children. Children are stimulated because staff make generally good use of time, resources and methods, when providing children with learning opportunities. For example, different activities are set up each day for children to access, children participate in a range of adult led and child initiated play experiences, as well as taking part in group and individual play experiences. However, effective questioning techniques are not consistently used by all staff to fully ensure children are encouraged to think for themselves and to effectively promote their learning. Assessment records detail how children are making progress within each area of learning and these are used to inform future planning to ensure there are no gaps in the curriculum. However, observational evidence has yet to be included within each child's assessments to fully support children's progress.

Children arrive happily and separate from their main carer with ease. They independently choose their own resources as they arrive, which helps to promote their decision making skills. Children are confident and they communicate well with their peers and the staff. They show generally good levels of concentration as they mainly sit and listen well to stories. Children respond to

significant experiences with a range of feelings. For example, a child becomes upset when they are accidentally hurt by another child and as soon as the child has received an apology they are more than happy to go off and begin playing once again. Children work well as part of a group and they are beginning to share. For example, when a child has finished painting, she happily hands her apron to the child who is patiently waiting for her turn. Children are aware of their own needs and display good self-care skills as they request to go to the toilet when needed, access drinking water when thirsty and wash their hands independently after activities.

Children interact and talk with their peers and the staff. They sit and listen to others when appropriate, for example, at story time. They enjoy listening to stories and often visit the book area to look at books by themselves, showing an awareness of how to handle books correctly. Children enjoy and join in with singing activities and they are beginning to recall parts of stories as staff read a regular book each week. All children are beginning to recognise their name in print as children find their name tags and sign themselves in as they arrive. Symbols, signs and written information displayed around the room help children to understand the daily routine of the setting. Children like to sit and practise their writing skills, with some children beginning to write clearly recognisable letters. Numbers are skilfully incorporated in to children's play by some of the staff team, which helps to promote their understanding. For example, as children use a fishing net to catch items in the water, staff encourage children to count the objects they catch. The child counts confidently up to ten, and staff begin asking the child what one more will make. This introduces children to simple calculation during a fun activity.

Children enjoy exploring and investigating objects and materials. They have access to information and communication technology resources during planned activities to support their learning. Although, further consideration to the accessibility of this equipment, will enhance children's learning within knowledge and understanding of the world. Children find out about past and present events through daily discussions relating to days of the week, where staff encourage children to remember what day it was yesterday and what day it is today. They observe and find out about their local environment through walks around the area. During one such walk staff took photographs and then produced a book showing all of the different places located on the same road as the pre-school. This allows the children to look at the book and re-call their experience and discuss what they observed. Children learn about other cultures and beliefs through planned activities and topics.

Children have great fun exploring media and materials. They enjoy messy activities like painting activities, bake bean play, shaving foam, sticking and corn flour. This introduces children to a variety of different textures, colours and shapes. Children enjoy playing musical instruments, singing songs from memory and dancing. They use their imagination well as they play. Children enjoy role-playing in the home area, which is regularly set up to depict a different environment. For example, to coincide with the current theme the home area is set up as the 'Three Bears House', where children have fun re-calling and acting out scenes from the story. This helps to re-enforce children's learning in a fun, informative way.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal care and concern. Clear information is gathered on children's

individual care needs, which enables staff to provide a good standard to meet these. Children's understanding of the wider world is promoted generally well through planned themes and because children have access to a good range of toys and resources reflecting positive images of diversity. For example, children enjoy learning about different cultures and festivals like Chinese New Year and Diwali. They also learn about their local environment through walks around the area and by visiting places within the locality like the church and fire station. Children with learning difficulties and, or disabilities are well supported because the settings special educational needs co-ordinator is well aware of her role and responsibilities. This helps to ensure children's needs are fully met.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's behaviour is good because staff regularly praise and encourage them, which helps to promote good behaviour and develop children's self-esteem. Children are beginning to learn right from wrong as staff discuss their behaviour with them, making sure they understand why something is either acceptable or not acceptable. Children confidently arrive and they independently and enthusiastically access the toys and resources set out around the room. They take turns and wait patiently during games and while lining up to use the toilet and wash their hands. Children share their equipment and resources during play and when completing activities. Children are settled and they are developing good relationships with their peers and the staff.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit because staff have formed a good partnership with parents. Parents comment very positively on the setting and are more than happy with the level of care provided for their children. They feel staff are approachable and they feel informed of how their children have been on a daily basis. Clear, accessible information is provided for parents on the settings policies and procedures. Further information is displayed on entrance notice boards, pinned to the outside doors and provided for parents in regular newsletters. This helps to ensure parents are kept up to date with current information. Parents receive good information on the Foundation Stage curriculum in the policies and procedures folder, although this has yet to be updated in the pre-school brochure. Although the setting has an open door policy, enabling parents to can come in at any time to view their children's progress records, systems are not in place to fully ensure these are regularly shared and discussed with parents. Parents are beginning to be encouraged to be involved with their children's learning through the use of 'Billy' the going home bear. 'Billy' spends time with each child at home and a diary is completed to show what he did while in the care of the child. This helps to develop good links with home. Further opportunities for parents to get involved with their children's learning are provided and are being continually developed.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a consistent, experienced staff team, which helps to ensure children receive a good standard of care. Their safety is fully ensured because the setting has clear recruitment, vetting and induction systems in place to ensure the suitability of staff working with children. Space and resources are mainly organised well to create a welcoming environment which meets children's needs. Children freely initiate their own play as they access the good range of toys and resources set out around the room. Documentation and records are clear,

informative and completed well. They are used effectively to support the running of the setting and to promote children's welfare, care and learning. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of funded children is good. Staff work well together as a team and they communicate effectively with each other, ensuring children are well cared for. Children benefit because staff regularly attend training courses, which helps them to keep up to date with current childcare practices. The supervisor of the setting is very pro-active and she has started to make improvements to the provision of nursery education through identifying the current strengths and weaknesses of the setting. Therefore, the supervisor and the staff are committed to continually making improvements to children's care and education.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection several recommendations were made regarding children's care and education. These related to children's health and welfare, documentation, and several aspects relating to the provision of nursery education. The setting has worked hard and they have made improvements in all areas. Policies relating to uncollected children and exclusion periods for when children are ill or infectious have been put in place and all staff hold current first aid certificates. This ensures children's health and welfare is promoted and protected at all times.

Regarding nursery education, the staff now use assessments to link in with their planning systems to ensure children are making progress. However, planning systems have yet to identify individual children to fully ensure they are consistently and appropriately challenged. Opportunities for children to respond to, experience and communicate their ideas through musical instruments are now planned for on a regular basis. Clear information on the foundation stage curriculum is now included in the policies and procedures folder and will be shortly updated in the parents brochure to ensure parents are fully informed. These improvements have had a positive impact on children's learning.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 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 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):

- review hand washing practices before snack and meal times and ensure organisation of snack time promotes children's health.

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop the system of observing children to improve the quality of assessments
- ensure planning identifies how individual children will be sufficiently challenged so that all staff are fully aware and can consistently move children on to the next stages of their development
- ensure all staff encourage children to think for themselves by asking open ended questions
- develop systems to ensure parents are kept fully informed of how their children are making progress.

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