

Fairhaven First Steps Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 254052

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Inspector Susan Cox

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Registered person Fairhaven First Steps 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?

Fairhaven First Steps Pre-school opened in 1998. It is a non-profit community group, with charitable status. The group operates from a room within the village hall in South Walsham. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. The group is open each day of the week with the exception of Monday during school term times. Sessions are from 09.30 to 12.00 with opportunity for children to stay until 13.15 for a lunchtime session on Wednesday.

There are currently 31 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the village and the surrounding area.

The group currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The committee employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and the other is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted as effective procedures are in place to gather and exchange information with their parents. Staff obtain specific advice about any particular medical treatment that may be required so they are able to respond appropriately when needed. If children become unwell when at the group staff assess the situation, make the children comfortable, and contact their parents to agree the best action to take. A member of staff holding a current first aid certificate is on duty at all times and other staff are currently updating their training. This means that when children have accidents they receive the correct treatment and a clear record is made to inform their parents. Children are learning to manage their personal hygiene effectively. They understand the importance of washing their hands after using the toilet and before having a snack. Staff give assistance as is needed and maintain hygiene throughout the session. For example, tables are cleaned before snack and disposable gloves are carried by all staff to use in the event of having to deal with an accident. These procedures help to minimise the risks of spreading infections to children.

Children enjoy a very good range of snacks to help promote healthy eating. A variety of fresh and dried fruits are served during the morning with a plain biscuit. Children are getting used to the new system and the 'snack bar' is working well. This enables children to take a break when they want during the main part of the session and activities continue without disruption. Rota helpers play a very valuable role in supporting the staff at snack time. Information is obtained from parents about any allergies their children may have. However, there is not a system for staff or rota helpers to easily check this when the children have their snack. As a result there is a potential risk of children having contact with food or drink that is not appropriate. Children learn about foods that are good for them as they chat to staff and join in a variety of planned activities including cookery. Making a curry and eating it at snack time or trying to eat noodles with chopsticks helps broaden children's experiences of foods people enjoy.

Children take part in an extremely good range of activities in the fresh air. They are frequently able to play either inside or in the garden for most of the session. This is because staff plan well and understand that some children learn better in the outside environment. Children are very active. They run, ride a variety of wheeled toys, balance on beams and climb and slide using the climbing frame. Playing games with the parachute and exercising and dancing to music is great fun. This helps them learn how their bodies work and a range of physical skills. When children are tired they may rest as they wish. For example, children take a large bean bag outside to lie down and watch friends playing, then bring it in and relax again, until they feel refreshed and ready to join in.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a bright and attractive play environment. This is because staff and helpers work hard to set the room up and make it attractive to the children prior to their arrival. Furniture and equipment is arranged to create areas for play and equal attention is given to setting up the outside area. Children benefit from the wide range of resources set out for them each day. This is regularly changed to make sure children remain interested and have a very good range to choose from. Staff are extending this further as photographs are being laminated

and displayed so children can ask for items in the cupboard which staff will get out on request. Resources are checked as used to ensure they stay safe and appropriate for the children to use.

Children's safety is promoted as staff conduct regular risk assessments and take relevant action to minimise risks. The premises are secure to prevent children leaving without supervision or unauthorised persons having access. There is a sound collection procedure and staff supervise children at all times for their safety. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe as they understand relevant boundaries. For example, they understand it is not safe for them to go into the store cupboard or play on the stage. This is further promoted through a range of projects and visits from road safety officers, paramedics and police personnel or by going to the fire station and finding out how such people help us remain safe.

Children are well protected as all staff have a very clear understanding of their duty to ensure children remain safe. There is a comprehensive child protection policy, which is available to all, with the flow chart and contact number displayed on the wall for use if required. As a result, staff may seek advice or make a referral when needed to ensure children are protected appropriately.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive due to the excellent balance of activities provided. They are happy and well settled receiving sensitive and caring support as they enthusiastically take part in interesting and stimulating play. Children's play and learning is enhanced by an extremely good range of resources which are readily available. Children often have the opportunity to play inside or outside as they wish. Many play for extended periods in the fresh air freely accessing the wide range of activities provided. For example they act out real and imaginary events in the role play area, paint at easels, dig in the sandpit and play circle games. Children move freely between the indoor and outdoor play areas being confident to organise their own play and with staff on hand to support and develop learning opportunities as they arise. All children are developing independence; they access the wide range of resources set out for them and often use these imaginatively. For example, children make a 'lion' out of the large construction set. They ride this around the room; relate it to a picture of a lion on a poster and roar, then find the yellow play dough to make a mane. Children benefit from the continuous play provision. This means they do not have to stop what they are doing to have their snack or join in a story. A 'snack bar' is available during much of the session so they may take a break when they wish. Whole group stories and games are provided. Children may choose to join in these or continue with their own play, as they wish. Opportunities for small groups to enjoy stories or play games at other times are also provided so all have similar experiences. Younger children are well supported as staff use 'Birth to three matters' to support their play and learning. The key person is responsible for writing up observations, and helping plan for children's future learning, using information recorded by all members of the staff team to ensure important details are not missed.

Children are building very positive relationships. They are happy and relaxed in the care of the staff team and settle quickly to play concentrating well and cooperating as they work with friends. Children benefit from the attention they receive from staff. For example, staff get down to children's level so they may give them their full attention, listen to them and ask questions to help them organise their thoughts. Consequently children are confident to chatter, explore and explain what they are doing and why. Children are learning to manage their behaviour well. They understand right from wrong as they work with staff to set boundaries

and know what is expected of them. Staff give gentle reminders to support them as they play and children listen to these and respond appropriately.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a well developed understanding of how children learn through free play and practical experiences. They use their knowledge and understanding as they plan and organise interesting activities to extend children's learning. Children's 'learning stories' show the progress they are making with key comments, examples of their work and photographs. Being keen to keep up-to-date with new practice the staff are currently changing the way they work to be more child led. However, observations and assessments are not currently sufficiently robust to avoid the potential risk of children just focusing on certain areas of learning that are of particular interest to them. Systems need to ensure all children continue to enjoy a balanced range of learning opportunities.

Children are interested and well motivated to learn. They are developing independence as they manage their personal hygiene and often organise their own play. They decide if they want to play inside or in the fresh air and when to have their snack. Children are making friends and learning to share and take turns as they play cooperating well with others. They are developing a sense of community as they celebrate a range of festivals such as Divali and Chinese New Year and enjoy meeting the vicar as they learn about Easter. Children are developing good communication, language and literacy skills. The chatter happily as they play and work with the adults knowing they will listen to them and value what they say and do. Children enjoy practising sounds and linking these to letters as they take part in well planned phonics sessions to help them with early reading skills. They love stories, whether in large groups or settling down with an adult on the cushions to share a book. Some children spontaneously find books and sit quietly as they 'read' these or just enjoy looking at the pictures. Children take 'messages and notes' in role play and make marks and patterns as they draw and paint in preparation for writing.

Children are learning the basis of mathematical development as they play. They count how many are in the group, work out if there is space to join the snack table and think about subtraction as they sing songs such as 'Ten Green Bottles'. They recognise numbers and patterns as they use dominoes, balance on the beam and look at the number to see how far they can get, and explain that shapes they are using in construction are squares, rectangles and circles. Weight is considered as they measure out ingredients for cookery and capacity is explored in their sand and water play. Children explore enthusiastically. They use magnifiers and bug finders to look at living things, grow plants and consider the weather as they play outside. Visitors help them learn about caring for animals and to understand more about bugs. Trips to the Fairhaven Trust gardens, in the spring and autumn, develops their interest in the seasons and how the countryside changes. Older children are very confident in the use of the computer and a range of technology. They use the mouse to complete appropriate work packages and use a tape recorder, calculator and programmable toys freely understanding how they work. Design and construction is practised as children make models and build with a range of construction sets and junk. Children are learning about the local community as they make visits to school helping them become familiar with the staff and premises and so easing the transition into formal education. They also enjoy visiting the local church and joining in celebrations.

Children frequently practise a range of physical skills from riding a tricycle with a friend to dancing to music with scarves. They really enjoy being active and are learning the effect this has on their bodies as they consider how fast their heart is beating and how hot there are

getting. Children use a comprehensive range of tools to paint, model, draw and construct helping them develop good coordination and fine motor skills. Children's natural creativity is developing well. They explore a range of craft materials and make interesting items. For example, for Easter they are making nests or baskets. Children choose boxes or trays and a selection of coloured tissue paper, netting, sequins, glitter, tinsel and cut and glue as they wish before counting and adding eggs. Children are proud of their creations and explain how they are made with confidence. Children use their imaginations as they dress up as pirates and play in a boat they make or create 'soup' by picking herbs in the garden and mixing them with water in a bucket. They listen to music and make up a 'band' with the musical instruments as they dance around the room.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children receive a warm welcome and staff know them well. All children are treated as individuals with staff understanding their personality and specific needs. Children receive the care and support they require as staff work with parents to assess their starting points and help them to make progress. They are learning about the wider world and our multi-cultural society as they play with a good range of resources promoting positive attitudes. This is developed further as they take part in projects and celebrations. Children with a disability or learning difficulties receive appropriate support from their key person, and the staff team in general, as they are fully included in the range of activities with their peers. Advice is taken from other professionals to ensure the children are helped to make appropriate progress in partnership with their parents. Children's behaviour is good. This is because staff understand and implement the positive behaviour management policy consistently. As a result, children know what is expected of them and respond appropriately to gentle reminders when given. For example, 'Please can I have listening ears and watching eyes?' is used to gain children's attention at story time. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children's care and education is well supported as parents are provided with very clear information when they join the group and good systems ensure they remain well informed. A flexible settling-in procedure helps children and parents become confident with the arrangements in their own time and a daily exchange of information makes sure they remain up-to-date. Children further benefit from the many ways in which parents are encouraged to take an active interest in their learning. For example, they are asked to help out on the rota enabling them to take part in sessions and experience what happens within the group. Opportunities are also provided for parents to join in family learning activities. They are encouraged to support topics as they are notified in advance of what will be covered. Attending the parents' session gives them time to meet with staff and discuss their child's progress in depth. Parents often help enthusiastically with fundraising activities in order to support the group. Many parents express their satisfaction with the care and education provided. Staff have a clear understanding of how to deal with any complaints that may be received and maintain a log as is required. However, the policy does not make it clear to parents how formal complaints will be handled to ensure any issues regarding their children will be dealt with appropriately.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's safety and welfare is promoted as they are cared for by staff who have been appropriately vetted. Relevant checks have also been completed on the committee or are currently being processed. Persons who have not been vetted are not permitted unsupervised contact with the children but work under the supervision of the staff to ensure children's safety. All staff display an affinity for working with children and use their knowledge, understanding and training very well to provide a good quality of care and education for all attending. Children enjoy an excellent range of activities with space, both inside and outside, being very well-organised. This is achieved by staff who ensure the premises are ready for children's arrival so they are available to work with and support the children. All the required documentation is in place, and readily available as required, to support children's care and welfare. Overall children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is good. Children's education is well supported by the skills of the manager who works effectively with the staff team and committee. She ensures she remains up-to-date with current developments and is committed to developing the service for the children and their families. There are good links with a variety of professionals who give advice and support, when needed, and this is readily taken on board. Various systems are in place to assess and monitor the quality of the educational provision and the group is currently working towards the Norfolk Quality Assurance scheme which is helping them reflect on and develop their provision. The committee plays a key role in supporting the staff and enabling them to do their work with the children. They are looking at further ways to support the easy transition into school and are keen to take advice and guidance offered.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to provide more opportunities for children to be independent when selecting resources. Children's independence is now developing well; they confidently make choices from a very good range of resources set out in the hall and garden.

At the last inspection of nursery education the key issues were to develop planning to help children link sounds and letters; to practise design and making skills; to learn about information and communication technology; to use their own ideas and imagination in art and design and to develop the planning for outdoor play. The provider has made very good progress with all these issues and children are developing the required skills in each of these areas of 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 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):

- develop a system for staff or rota helpers to easily check if children have allergies to certain food or drink
- improve the complaints policy to ensure it makes clear to parents how formal complaints will be handled.

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):

- make sure observations and assessments are sufficiently robust to ensure children continue to enjoy a balanced range of learning opportunities.

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