



Victoria Road Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	116836
Inspection date	12 January 2007
Inspector	Joanne Graham
Setting Address	Tilehurst Village Hall, Victoria Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 5AB
Telephone number	07989 261637 (mob)
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Registered person	Victoria Road Playgroup
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?

Victoria Road Pre-school registered in 1968. It operates from Tilehurst Village Hall, which is situated to the west of Reading and the group uses the large hall and small room for quieter play. The pre-school serves the local community. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday from 09.30 to 12.00 and Monday from 12.15 to 14.45. It is open term time only. There is a fully enclosed outside play area for the children to use.

There are currently 62 children on roll. This includes 18 children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. The setting has provision to support children with special needs, although none currently attend, and English as an additional language. The setting employs seven staff, of whom three hold a level 3 qualification. Staff members of the pre-school also run the Toddler Group on a Friday afternoon, during term time.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about healthy eating and living because staff are good role models in promoting this. They wipe the tables before children use them for snacks, wear gloves to change nappies and wash their hands before preparing the fruit. Children play in a clean environment and follow good hygiene procedures, such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating, and using tissues to wipe their noses. The staff promote independence well, within the restraints of the building, through sensitive support and providing suitable resources, such as a box of tissues in the main room and steps to access the adult sized toilets and sink. Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because staff follow policies and procedures. They inform parents when there is an outbreak of an infectious disease, such as Chicken Pox, in the setting and ensure parents adhere to the exclusion periods if their child is poorly. Most staff have suitable first aid training, the first aid box is easily accessible and accidents and incidents occurring in the setting are accurately recorded and signed by parents. However, children's existing injuries are not recorded.

Children enjoy healthy food and drinks for snack time. Parents provide fruit, which staff cut into bite-sized pieces for the children to share in a lovely social experience. Children's dietary requirements are respected and met and all staff preparing and serving the snacks are aware of these. Although children can access drinks during snack time, request additional drinks throughout the session, and staff provide additional fluids during warmer weather, they are unable to independently access drinks to meet their individual needs. Children take part in regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors boosting their development well. They access the secure garden regularly using scooters, tricycle and slides, increasing their climbing, balancing and steering skills well. In addition, they access large apparatus and equipment inside and particularly enjoy rocking on the see-saw co-operatively with their friends.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment, which staff transform daily to make it attractive and welcoming to the children and their parents within the restraints of the building. There is sufficient space for the children to move around and play comfortably and safely and to access the toys and equipment. Staff actively assess and minimise most potential hazards. For example, the stage and kitchen are inaccessible to children and staff monitor children's entry and exit to the premises with extreme vigilance. However, although staff and children practise emergency evacuations regularly, some fire exits in the main room are blocked and therefore not easily accessible. Children access and use suitable and safe equipment, toys and furniture. Staff ensure these are appropriate for the children's stage of development, age appropriate, have no choke hazards and appeal to their likes and dislikes. Staff set up activities on child-sized tables and chairs, to enable the children to reach the equipment and toys. Staff implement 'rules' to help keep children safe and apply these sensitively, such as sitting down to eat and drink at snack time.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. They have a good knowledge of signs and symptoms of abuse and most staff have attended recent training. Documentation, policies and literature support staff in this role, although some contain out of date information.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle, are comfortable and become happy in the provision because staff meet and greet them and provide suitable resources, activities and equipment, which appeal to them and engage their interest. Staff provide good support and make learning fun. They offer encouragement and praise to the children for their achievements and efforts and provide activities with sufficient challenge to move their learning forward. Children are involved in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support their development and learning, such as free painting, jigsaws, listening to stories, emergent writing skills and construction blocks. Children are becoming confident to make some decisions, investigate, and use their initiative through sensitive and good adult support and attention.

Children acquire new knowledge and skills, increasing their language, maths, imaginative and creative development well, for example, making appointments in the hairdressers, counting the uni-fix blocks and singing rhymes. They make positive relationships and relate very well with the staff and other children. Staff foster the children's curiosity well and boost their self-esteem by listening and valuing their ideas and views. Children are confident to approach visitors and ask why they are there, such as to the inspector, and they enjoy social occasions, such as snack time, story and circle time. They play along side one another at the sand, when free painting and when using the dough and are involved in their play, at times for extended periods. For example, one child selects a book from the open shelving and sits at the table to look at the pictures. Children often invite staff into their play, such as with the shape pattern making game, magnet blocks and the small world, and are confident to express their views and ideas as they know they are listened to. Staff have a good understanding of early years curriculum, such as Birth to three and the Foundation Stage, and support children's learning well.

Nursery education

Teaching and learning is good. Staff sit with the children at activities, discussing what they are doing and extending some of the learning opportunities well. They praise and encourage children's efforts and achievements, boosting their confidence and self-esteem. Staff engage children's interests as they provide a stimulating, varied environment and are aware of the children's preferences. Staff have a good knowledge of early years curriculum and plan activities to develop the children's learning. They plan one focus activity per day, covering a different area of learning. They accommodate all levels of learning through differentiating and adapting the activities and equipment. Although there is a provision to record written evaluations to inform future planning needs, staff do not complete these.

Children show curiosity. They want to join in activities and approach these and staff with confidence, knowing they can participate and achieve. Children explore different media, such

as wet sand and dough. They ladle sand into buckets using spades and scoops, creating shaped moulds, and squeeze, pat and roll the dough into their desired shapes, such as snakes and balls. Children are beginning to link to others for guidance and support and seek others to share their experiences with, such as with the magnets and shape pattern making. Some children are forming strong relationships with staff and their peers and often invite and welcome them into their play. Most children can recognise their own names, such as with self-registration and at snack time, and some are beginning to mark make to label their own work. Children are able to follow verbal instructions from staff and they enjoy listening to stories and talking about what is happening. Most children can count to five and recognise the numerals. They participate in the number game where they match the number and count the correct uni-fix blocks and then find this number in the textbook. Staff encourage number awareness and ask questions to help children recognise and match patterns, for example, in the number book matching the socks.

Children use resources, such as telephones and old keyboards in their imaginative play and explore with magnets. However, there are few opportunities for children to explore everyday technology. Children keenly join in the singing and actions to rhymes and jingles, and are building up a good repertoire of songs to request. They control their bodies well, negotiating spaces inside and outdoors, when moving around and they handle small tools, such as cutters, paintbrushes and glue sticks with increasing skill.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to respond to high and appropriate expectations for their behaviour and staff are consistent when managing boundaries. They praise and encourage good behaviour and strategies used for managing unwanted behaviour are age appropriate and suitable for children's stages of development. Children's behaviour is good and at times very good. They negotiate, work in co-operation with one another, and are learning to share and take turns. For example, they rock on the see-saw together, wait patiently for their snacks and line up to go outside without pushing. Children feel a sense of belonging as staff spend time with them and listen and value their ideas and views. They have their own pegs to store their belongings, which are labelled with the child's name and picture. These labels are replicated on the self-registration board and for snack time, to reinforce the children's sense of belonging. Staff are aware of the children's family context and talk about this with them. Children develop self-esteem and respect for others as staff are good role models and offer praise and encouragement to their efforts and achievements. Children access a setting that supports their needs and allows them to make some informed choices, such as self-selecting activities during free choice. Staff treat all the children with equal concern and all children are able to participate in all activities to their own potential. The setting has good provision to support children with special needs and for children with English as an additional language.

Children become aware of the wider society and foster an understanding through celebrating festivals from their own and other cultures, such as Hanukkah, Thanks Giving, Christmas, Remembrance Day and Chinese New Year. Children benefit from activities and resources, which help them value diversity, such as small world figures, dressing up clothes, play food and

equipment and books. This effectively fosters their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is good. There is a parents' committee and general meetings are held annually. Parents are kept informed of their child's day and achievements through daily verbal exchanges, notices boards and linking with their child's key worker. They develop a good two-way flow between home and the setting, promoting continuity of care for the children. They are aware they are able to approach staff in confidence. This promotes children's development and welfare.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff set up a welcoming and stimulating environment daily, encouraging the children to participate with the activities. Good organisation skills, policies, procedures and children's records promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution to the setting. All regulatory documentation is in place, although some lacks necessary detail. For example, children's arrival and departure times are not accurately recorded if different from the sessional times, children's existing injuries are not recorded and some policies contain out of date information. Staff are aware of their roles and duties and their deployment and organisation of the routine and room contributes significantly to the children's enjoyment and fun. Staff maintain ratios, supervise the children at all times and ensure they are never left unattended with persons not vetted. This safeguards the children's welfare.

Leadership and management are good. They support and actively encourage staff training and hold annual appraisals. The supervisor carries out regular self-assessments of the provision and works towards addressing highlighted areas to improve, ensuring the standards in others areas are maintained. Record keeping systems are used well to meet children's individual needs and to inform future planning. Although the parental committee supports staff with the implementation of children's records of achievement, staff currently complete these in their own time. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the setting had five recommendations for the care inspection and four key weaknesses for the nursery education. They have addressed all of these, moving the setting forward and raising the standards of provision for the children. Staff have increased their knowledge of child protection issues and the operation plan ensures key workers are in place, staff ratios and qualified staff working are correct and activity plans are displayed. The setting has a complaint's procedure with systems to record parental complaints and all parents give written consent for the setting to act in a medical emergency. This safeguards and promotes children's well-being and welfare.

Children's overall development, in all areas of learning, benefit from staff planning activities, observing their achievements and using this information to help support their next areas of development. Staff plan a focus activity every day, covering a different area of learning. They adapt to accommodate the different learning stages of the children and have clear learning

aims. They complete verbal evaluations only and this information is not always used effectively to inform future planning needs.

Staff provide activities to develop children's emergent writing appropriate for their ages and stages of development. They ensure children can access media in the imaginative area, such as pens and papers to take appointments in the hairdressers, and large paper and crayons and chalk and large chalkboards daily. Children benefit from opportunities to label their work and to find their name cards at snack time.

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.

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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):

- make sure clearly marked fire exits are easily accessible at all times
- ensure children's arrival and departure times are accurately recorded if different from sessional hours, policies contain up to date information and children's existing injuries are recorded.

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 use of evaluations of focus activities to inform future planning needs of the children
- increase opportunities for children to access every day technology
- consider opportunities for staff to complete children's records of achievements and developmental records during operational hours.

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