



Headstart at Shevington Vale

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY340840
Inspection date	17 January 2007
Inspector	Victoria Gail Halliwell
Setting Address	Shevington Vale Cp School, Runshaw Avenue, Appley Bridge, Wigan, Lancashire, WN6 9JP
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Registered person	Alison Ellen Davies
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 satisfactory. 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?

Headstart pre school opened in 2006. They operate from a single room within Shevington Vale Primary School. A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 during school term times. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 22 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 receive funding for early education. The pre-school currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, they do not currently support any children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs three members of staff, of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and the third is suitably experienced in working with young children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is promoted, because staff implement the setting's hygiene policy in relation to food handling and preparation. For example, washing hands and ensuring tables are cleaned prior to snack times. Children are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of good personal hygiene, as staff routinely remind them to wash their hands before snack and after toileting. Parents are well informed of the settings detailed exclusion policy, which provides clear guidance for parents about exclusion periods to help prevent the spread of infection.

Children are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits, as staff provide a selection of fresh fruit midway through the morning session. However the limited quantity means most children only sample one very small piece of fruit. Staff encourage parents to provide a water bottle for their child, which is available throughout the session. During snack time children are also offered milk as an alternative to their water.

Children have good opportunities to develop their large physical skills. The provision of a covered outdoor area ensures they benefit from daily opportunities to play in the fresh air and sunlight, which contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Children confidently pedal and manoeuvre three-wheeled trikes or push prams, avoiding obstacles in their path. They enjoy regular access to low-level climbing apparatus, which encourages younger children to practise and refine their climbing skills as they scale the three steps, whilst more able children enjoy the challenge of the vertical rungs. Children have fewer opportunities to practise and refine their use of small tools, such as scissors, glue spreaders and writing materials.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and their parents are individually greeted by staff as they arrive at the setting. Children enter the setting confidently and demonstrate a clear sense of belonging. Parents and children are familiar with routines, for example, finding the child's name for self-registration and hanging up coats on the individual pegs. A range of activities and play materials are prepared for the children's arrival and create a welcoming child-centred environment. Children are able to make some choices about how they spend their time, selecting their preferred activity from those provided by the staff.

Staff are mindful of the children's safety and complete a daily inspection to help minimise the risk of accidental injury. However, children's safety is compromised as older school children regularly use the pre-school room as an exit route and to gain access into the school hall. Whilst pre-school staff are vigilant and monitor the external door at busy times, such as midmorning break, it is difficult to manage at other times. Consequently, there is a risk that children may enter the school grounds or other areas within the school. Staff have also failed to detect potentially hazardous items stored in low-level cupboards, for example, a stapler and anti-bacterial wipes. There are no systems in place to ensure the safety of small electrical appliances. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe as staff provide clear guidelines

and explain the possible consequences of their actions. For example, they must hold the handle on the trampoline or they might fall off, they must not run inside or they might bump into something or fall over.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by staff, who are clear about their duty to report concerns and have a satisfactory understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff training in respect of child protection is varied and this is reflected in the knowledge of individual staff. The designated person is clear about their role and able to implement the settings child protection procedure, to protect children from possible harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and enjoy their time at the setting. Most children have formed secure attachments with staff and confidently request assistance if they need help, for example, to fasten coats or use scissors. Staff provide warm and affectionate care. They respond quickly to meet children's individual needs, for example, comforting a child who becomes upset after seeing an older sibling and providing assistance for younger children who need help with toileting. However, limited information about children's individual needs is requested when children are admitted. For example, staff are not aware of younger children's routines and do not know if they have comforters.

Staff provide a varied range of activities ensuring resources are suitable for the two year olds within the group, however, this does at times hamper the achievements of the more able three and four year olds. For example, stubby paintbrushes are provided for all children regardless of ability. As a result, one child's careful brushstrokes are not reflected in his finished picture, as the brush is too wide for him to paint within the lines. Interesting plans and topics are interwoven into the session, for example, staff talk to children about different animals and where they live at circle time; play materials which encourage the children to build animal shelters are then provided, followed by a junk modelling activity. Staff include children under three in most planned activities, however, these are generally more developmentally appropriate for the older children. In practice, staff respond to individual abilities and provide appropriate assistance and support so younger children can participate. Staff observe the participation of the two year olds but do not measure their achievements against an appropriate framework, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Consequently, staff do not adequately plan for their future learning and development.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children enjoy a varied range of well planned activities which help them make progress towards the early learning goals. However, children's learning is at times hampered by the constant inclusion of two year olds who become restless and disrupt older and more able children within the group. For example, during stories and circle time, when staff introduce new topics and stimulate the children's interest, building on any previous experience and knowledge they may have. The routine use of the pre-school area as a thoroughfare by pupils is also an added distraction.

Termly plans are clear and well detailed, they flow naturally from one week to the next, building on previous activities to increase children's awareness of living things and the world around them. For example, staff introduce domestic animals through books and pictures, and encourage children to talk about and draw their own pets; they then explore how children feel about their pets and the care they need. Staff then introduce farm animals, exploring where they live and how they help us.

Children confidently explore their surroundings, but have few opportunities to operate independently, for example, they are unable to pour their own drinks or choose when they have their snacks. Most activities are adult-led, and whilst the range of play materials provided by the staff generally interests the children, they are unable to select alternatives from the storage units or adapt the resources they have. For example, one child puts construction materials in the pet bowl in order to feed the dog in the role play area, but is asked to return it to the construction table. Many children wait for adult direction before commencing an activity, for example, waiting for instruction before junk modelling or painting a picture. Children routinely wait to be invited for their snack.

Many children are interested in books and listen with interest to stories, they enjoy self-registration and most can identify their own names. More able children are able to form recognisable letters and when encouraged attempt to write their name on their pictures and models. Few children differentiate between writing and drawing, and the mark making area is centred around pictures and colouring activities. A list of the children's names are displayed in this area, however, these do not encourage the children to write their own name, as they are attached to the wall, the print is small and some names are written in italic font. Many children count confidently by rote, they have good daily opportunities to practise and refine their number skills as they count the number of children in attendance, the number of boys and girls and calculate if there are more or less girls than boys.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriately fostered. Staff are positive role models who show care and concern for those around them. They provide gentle explanations which raise children's awareness of the feelings of others and the impact their behaviour has. As a result, children are becoming increasingly aware of socially acceptable behaviour. Older children know they must take turns and share, they are generally very tolerant of the younger or less able children within the group, understanding that a new little boy does not know he has to go to the back of the line. Children are routinely praised for their good behaviour and thanked for being helpful or kind, a daily recognition award is given to the 'star of the day' at the end of each session. Children are closely supervised by staff who recognise the triggers for children who present more challenging behaviour and use distraction techniques to prevent instances of unwanted behaviour occurring.

Children have some opportunities to learn about the cultures and beliefs of others. Staff use resources from early years publications to increase their own limited knowledge and understanding before they plan activities which relate to festivals and celebrations for the children. A good range of puzzles which reflect positive images of gender culture and disability

are available; in addition a selection of dolls, play figures and books are also available. Children with learning difficulties and or disabilities are well supported. Staff work closely with external agencies, such as speech therapists or inclusion workers, to ensure individual education plans meet children's individual needs.

Mutually respectful relationships have developed between parents and staff, both parties report an open door policy and state that much information is exchanged verbally when children are dropped off or collected. Parents are well informed of the setting's policies and procedures; individual copies are produced for each family to retain for future reference. A range of policies and procedures, including the complaints procedure, are also prominently displayed within the setting.

Partnership with parents of children receiving funded nursery education is good. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum, which includes details of the areas of learning. Staff also provide written details of planned activities and explain how these activities promote children's learning and help them make progress. For example, explaining that a topic centred around nursery rhymes and stories enables children to investigate change as they make porridge or explore shape and size as they talk about the characters in the story. Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning at home through suggested activities which are sent home for each topic.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Adequate systems are in place to ensure the small team is appropriately managed. The manager works effectively as a member of the staff team, sharing roles and responsibilities for the day to day operation of the setting. A deputy manager has recently been appointed, however, at the time of inspection, designated responsibility for co-ordinating behaviour management, implementing child protection procedures and liaising with external agencies is retained by the manager. Effective recruitment procedures are in place to ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted and have the necessary skills and experience to work with young children. Whilst formal induction procedures have not been implemented, the manager makes informal observations of staff practices and leads by example, providing additional support of guidance for staff as required.

Leadership and management of the nursery education provision is satisfactory. The manager is directly responsible for planning and delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum. She works alongside other members of the staff team, informally monitoring their practice and effectiveness as they lead planned activities with the children. The manager effectively redirects staff to offer additional support to younger children who become restless, particularly during large group activities, but fails to reorganise the daily routine to better meet the needs of a very mixed ability group, which includes a large number of children who are not in receipt of funded nursery education.

Attention to documentation is generally good. A wide range of informative policies and procedures including information on health and safety, child protection, equal opportunities and behaviour management, have been devised by the manager and are openly shared with

parents. Records relating to children's attendance and parental consents are satisfactorily maintained.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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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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):

- put systems in place to observe and record what children under three can do and use these observations to plan the next steps for their play, learning and development, for example, by using the Birth to three matters framework
- conduct a risk assessment and take appropriate action to minimise any risks identified
- improve the system for obtaining information relating to children's individual needs
- minimise the disruption to children's play and learning from pupils within the school (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- provide greater opportunities for children to operate independently and make meaningful choices about how they spend their time

- give greater consideration to children's individual abilities, so that more able children are not disrupted by younger or less able children within the setting, also ensure that the resources provided reflect children's skills and abilities and provide sufficient challenge particularly for the more able children
- improve opportunities and resources that will encourage children to use the mark making area meaningfully and initiate the use of mark marking in their play.

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