



South Woodham Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337755
Inspection date	23 January 2007
Inspector	Patricia Mary Champion
Setting Address	Woodville Primary School, Brent Avenue, South Woodham Ferrers, CHELMSFORD, CM3 5SE
Telephone number	07816 591545
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Registered person	South Woodham 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 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?

South Woodham Pre-school is run by a committee. It was established in 1970 and moved into the current premises in 2006. It operates from a demountable building with two rooms sited within the grounds of Woodville Primary School in South Woodham Ferrers. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The children also have use of the school's playground and playing field. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30 and from 12:30 to 15:00 on Monday to Friday.

There are currently 71 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 54 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school serves the local community and surrounding areas. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs 10 staff. Of these, five staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority, the Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and the South Woodham Ferrers Cluster Group.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about the importance of effective personal hygiene through the daily routine. They wash their hands after using the toilet and use anti-bacterial gel to cleanse their hands prior to eating snack. Staff make sure that the premises is cleaned daily and tables and kitchen work surfaces are frequently washed. Arrangements for nappy changing are satisfactory and any toileting accidents are very sensitively dealt with. Staff can act in the event of an emergency because they hold first aid certificates and the first aid box is readily accessible. Accidents are appropriately recorded and signed by parents. Children are protected from illness and infection because there is a written policy regarding the exclusion of children with communicable and infectious diseases. However, staff may not always be able to deal with all children's health needs because the written sick child policy does not cover the procedures regarding a child becoming unwell whilst at the setting.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They are offered a range of different food to taste at snack time, for example, cheese spread or marmite on crackers. Drinking water is available throughout the sessions so that children can help themselves when they are thirsty. At snack time children are offered a carton of milk or parents provide juice in named cups. The staff ensure that they are aware of any allergies or special dietary requirements so that the children's individual needs are met. Children are not always encouraged to develop independence skills at snack time, for example, children do not spread their own toppings onto the crackers.

Children have regular opportunities for physical play, which contributes to their good health. The secure outdoor area is used throughout the year, weather permitting. Children also have access to the school playground and field. Children ride cars and scooters with confidence and push prams carefully, changing speed and direction to avoid obstacles. Indoors, children also have opportunities for physical play. The children enjoy developing their coordination skills when walking carefully along the balance beam. Provision is made for children to rest or play quietly according to their needs. Comfortable chairs and cushions are provided so that children can relax as they read a book.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a newly built, safe and very comfortable environment. The playrooms are bright and spacious with dedicated areas for messy play. The premises are made welcoming as staff display posters and examples of the children's artwork. There is plenty of space for the children to move freely and toilets are located adjacent to the playroom to allow children's independent access. Regular risk assessment is undertaken to ensure that any potential hazards are removed

or minimised. Safety features such as guards to radiators and electric socket covers are in place to protect the children from harm. The staff are vigilant about the security of the children. All visitors are carefully monitored and the gate at the entrance to the setting is kept locked throughout the session to prevent unauthorised access or children exiting unnoticed.

Children learn about their own personal safety. They regularly practise fire drills so that they know how to evacuate the premises in an emergency. Children know that it is safer to walk rather than run when indoors and they help to pick up any tripping hazards.

Children play with a wide variety of safe play materials appropriate for their ages and stages of development. There is a comprehensive inventory of resources. Tables and chairs are suitably child-sized so that children can sit and eat and play in comfort. All toys and equipment are checked regularly for damage and cleanliness.

Children are safeguarded because the staff understand their child protection responsibilities. Staff are aware of current information regarding child protection which ensures they act in the best interests of children. They have recently attended safeguarding training and have the new Essex lilac child protection book. There is a clear child protection policy for staff to follow if they have concerns about a child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are mostly confident to make their own choices about the activities and the games they play. When they arrive most children quickly find an activity to interest them and they have fun as they play. For example, children spent time absorbed while bathing the baby dolls or hunting for creepy crawlies in the sand. Children are curious about the activities and ask questions and talk through their actions. For example, children discuss colours and patterns as they thread coloured pasta onto ribbons to make necklaces. Interaction between the staff and children is friendly and lively. Children chat animatedly about events at home and staff ask questions that encourage children to think and give interesting answers. There is an effective key worker system and staff get to know the children well. The staff are now starting to look at how the 'Birth to three matters' framework can be used to plan activities for the youngest children attending the pre-school.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. The staff plan a curriculum that covers all areas of learning and three focussed adult-led activities each week are linked to the stepping stones. Activities are adapted to offer support or challenge for the children. Free-play at the start of each session allows children to use their initiative and make choices. However, use of the play environment and teaching methods are not particularly innovative or stimulating. Children display higher levels of interest and motivation as they sit and persist at activities of their choosing. However, midway through the session the play equipment is cleared away and the children then have fewer opportunities to make decisions about their learning as they take part in whole group activities. While the whole group activities such as registration, story time, snack

time or group singing hold the attention of the oldest or more able children attending; the younger children cannot sustain their concentration and lose interest or become distracted. Children do understand the need for responsible behaviour and they are managed appropriately so that they understand right from wrong.

Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals given their starting points and capabilities. Staff carefully observe children as they take part in activities and they chart their progress and achievements. However, staff are not consistently using their observations to identify the children's next steps in learning.

Children communicate with increasing confidence. Story sessions are thoroughly enjoyed by the older children, who quickly become engrossed in the animated telling of familiar stories such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. They clearly enjoy the company of their peers and they seek others out to play with chosen activities and resources. For example, children play cooperatively in the role play corner, preparing and cooking a lunch for their friends. Children also play imaginatively with the dolls house, small world town and the airport.

Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through discussion at registration time. They talk about their local environment and the different houses people live in. For example, children explain to staff that a dwelling without stairs is called a bungalow. Children are developing a keen sense of time as they learn the days of the week and months of the year and make observations about the weather each day. The children confidently use computer equipment to complete simple programmes and accurately use specific children's technology to click and drag.

Children are encouraged to practise their writing skills as they attempt to write their names on their drawings. They are developing good hand-eye coordination and hold pencils correctly. Plenty of opportunities for mark-making are provided and children enjoy using paints for colour mixing. However, staff do not consistently provide writing materials in the role play area so that children can write for a purpose.

Children use mathematical language during play and talk about the shape of objects. They are encouraged to count during everyday tasks, for example, when working out the number of plates needed on a table for snack. Planned activities allow children to count fingerprints and children recognise numerals when they see the date on the calendar.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a sense of belonging and there are effective settling in procedures that encourage children to separate from their parents and carers in confidence. They form warm relationships with staff and receive support for their individual needs. Staff recognise when children may have additional needs and a system is in place to support children that may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has attended relevant training and links with the area SENCO to make sure that children receive the best possible care. Close links have been made with the neighbouring school and children attend

story time in the reception class. This ensures a smooth transition for children into the reception year when they start full time education.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children become aware of wider society and develop a positive sense of themselves and others. Children have access to toys, books and posters that reflect positive images of gender, culture, ethnicity and disability. Festivals and traditional events from around the world are celebrated. Children develop confidence and self-esteem and they behave generally well. Plenty of praise and encouragement is heard and children understand social skills such as sharing, turn taking and remembering to say 'please and thank you'. Children enjoy helping the staff and are eager to be the special helper for the day and assist the staff at registration time.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are made to feel welcome and regular newsletters are sent out to keep them informed. Written information about the pre-school and other childcare literature is freely available in the entrance hall. Each day the staff write about the activities and the routine on a notice board. Parents can also view information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, staff are not currently providing ideas about play and learning activities to encourage parents to contribute to the pre-school learning experiences or to continue their child's learning at home. Parents regularly meet with the key workers so that they are kept informed about the children's progress and an open day was held when the pre-school first opened in the new premises. Parents speak positively about the care and education the children receive in the pre-school and appreciate the efforts of the staff team.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a dedicated and caring staff team. Children's care and learning is positively supported by the consistent staffing levels. Most of the staff have been vetted through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). However, new members of staff do not complete the appropriate forms to check their suitability with any sense of urgency. Space and resources are appropriately organised to meet the children's needs and ensure their safety, welfare and development.

All the essential documentation required to meet the regulations is in place. An operational plan that links with Every Child Matters is currently being devised and implemented. The manager is in the process of reviewing and updating the policies and procedures so that they underpin the efficient and safe management of the pre-school. Confidentiality is given a high regard and all paperwork with information about the children is securely stored in a locked filing cabinet.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager of the pre-school delegates roles and responsibilities to her staff team and is supported by the management committee. All staff are actively involved in delivering the curriculum. There are regular staff meetings and good support is offered for staff to develop and update their knowledge and skills. All staff attend short courses and some staff have recently completed or are currently undertaking recognised early years qualifications. Consequently children are cared

for by motivated adults who convey their enthusiasm and have developed a strong team spirit. Considerable effort has been made to ensure that the move into the new premises created minimal disruption to the children's care and enjoyment. The staff team are committed to the improvement of nursery education. There is a system for staff appraisal to ensure that ongoing training needs are met. However, staff are not consistently evaluating the activities or the routine to ensure that children are given the opportunity to achieve as much as they can.

Overall children's needs are met.

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):

- ensure that everyday routines such as snack time provide opportunities to encourage the children's independence
- make sure that recruitment procedures are rigorous and that staff complete the appropriate vetting procedures
- continue to develop the policies and procedures within the operational plan so that they effectively explain how the setting runs.

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):

- evaluate and review the organisation of the everyday routine to ensure that children's learning is fully maximised during large group activities and children have more time to self select equipment and take decisions in their learning
- ensure staff use assessment records to identify the children's next steps in learning and they use this information to inform future planning
- develop the channels for communication so that parents can become more involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways.

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