

Somerville Community Scheme

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306487
Inspection date	24 April 2007
Inspector	Elizabeth Margaret Grocott
Setting Address	Somerville Primary School, Northbrook Road, Wallasey, Wirral, CH44 9EA
Telephone number	0151 637 2467
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Registered person	Somerville Community Scheme
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Somerville Pre-School and Oscars Out of School service are sited in a mobile unit within the grounds of Somerville Primary School. The groups operate from two playrooms, an entrance area, toilets and a kitchen. The children have the use of the school playground for outdoor play. The two services are managed by the same staff group and share the same management committee.

Each service is registered to provide care for a maximum of 30 children at any one time. The services provided include sessional care, out of school care, holiday care and wrap-a-round care for preschool children. The preschool operates during term time between 09.00 and 11.30 and again each afternoon from 12.30 until 15.00. There is a lunch club from 11.30 until 12.15 for children attending the morning preschool session. Oscars Out of School care scheme, operates each weekday from 08.00 to 08.50 and from 15.15 to 18.00. During the school holidays, Oscars is open from 08.00 to 18.00. The groups support several children with learning difficulties.

There are currently 64 children on roll using sessional care, of which 56 children are funded for nursery education. There are 11 children on roll who access wrap-a-round care and 51 children

on roll using out of school care. The last time the holiday club was in operation there were 18 children on roll.

All staff are qualified with either NNEB or NVQ in Child Care and Education or Playwork. Several members of staff have a current paediatric first aid certificate. The preschool has the support of a Foundation Stage consultant to develop 'Birth to three matters' and the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. The groups have a hamster and some goldfish as pets. Oscars is a member of 4Kids and has been awarded the highest level of accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment and thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices to meet children's individual health requirements. Staff are positive role models and maintain good standards of hygiene. Health and well-being are promoted effectively, for example, through consistent hand washing procedures where children are aware of why they wash their hands and do so at appropriate times without reminders. Children develop good levels of personal independence, such as sweeping up sand that has fallen to the floor and wiping their own noses. Children's health is protected as staff are first aid trained, should a child require first aid treatment. All documentation for the recording of accidents and medicines are in place and maintained accurately.

Children benefit from healthy snacks. They sit together socially to enjoy a drink and some crackers during the session, laying the foundations for healthy eating. They have opportunities to eat fruit each day as they choose a piece to take home with them at the end of the session. Children learn about healthy eating as they make fruit kebabs and vegetable soup in connection with their topic. They are encouraged to drink either milk or water during the session and to have extra drinks during warm weather. This helps to form healthy habits for the future.

All children benefit from regular opportunities for outdoor play. They run around individually or in friendly groups, enjoying the freedom and benefiting from exercise that raises their heartbeat. Indoors, children use the climbing frame to develop upper body strength as they hang and pull themselves up. Their coordination is challenged when they have to skilfully climb over the bars, down the ladder, and scoot through the tunnel. Children regularly have opportunities to develop their fine motor skills, for example, manipulating play dough, using scissors and mark making with pencils.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming environment. This is spacious and organised well to meet the care, learning and development needs of the children attending. For example, the room is divided into areas to maximise space in order to provide children with varied experiences. The setting is colourful and bright, with children's artwork decorating the walls and ceilings. This provides children with a stimulating environment. However, the arrangements for changing children who wear nappies do not respect children's privacy, as other children have to squeeze past where they lie on the floor, to get to the toilet.

Children benefit from a range of age appropriate toys and resources, which they can access independently through effective labelling and storage. They choose from a variety of activities, all of which are easily accessed. The toys and equipment are maintained to a good, clean standard.

Children are generally safe and protected from any potential risks as a full risk assessment of the premises is carried out. There is a system in place to check the outdoor area each day before the children play outside, to ensure nothing has been thrown into the area overnight that could harm children. Fire evacuation procedures are practised regularly and are carried out at different times of the day to ensure that all children understand the procedure. However, fire doors are wedged open, against the advice of the fire safety officer, putting children at risk. All children learn simple rules that help keep them safe when playing. They benefit from a range of safety measures, for example, electric socket covers and not running when they are inside. The security of the setting is effective, ensuring children are unable to leave the premises without a suitable adult and preventing unwanted visitors gaining access.

Children's well-being is safeguarded by staff who have good knowledge and understanding about the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect. Children benefit because staff update their training regularly and follow the written policies.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled, happy and confident within the friendly setting. They arrive generally happy and ready to participate and enjoy a range of stimulating activities. These encourage individual development through effective staff interaction and support. Staff have a good knowledge of children's abilities and challenge them effectively. Children understand expectations and respond quickly to requests, for example, to tidy up and when they are asked to sit together on the carpet. Children enjoy the role play area and imitate adults and experiences familiar to them. They put the baby in the pushchair to take it for a walk and sit in the waiting room at the baby clinic role play, with the baby undressed, ready to see the doctor. Activities are changed regularly to encourage children's interest and promote learning.

Children under three explore and experiment through a range of well-planned activities that are appropriate for their stage of development and provide stimulation and challenge. Staff have successfully implemented the 'Birth to three matters' framework to enhance the provision for children under three. Planning takes account of children's individual ability. Staff encourage children to play together and share. Children receive praise and encouragement for their achievements, which helps to develop their self-esteem.

Children who attend the out of school club enjoy a range of activities that they play a part in choosing. They play 'pass-the-leek' on St David's day and come to the club in their pyjamas to raise money for Comic Relief on Red Nose day. Children enjoy baking and make jam tarts, and act out short plays using realistic props.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the early learning goals and ensure that they continually revise and review their arrangements. They use effective systems to observe and record children's achievements and plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning. They are very aware of children's individual needs and

extend and support activities as necessary. Planning covers all areas of the curriculum. Staff use effective teaching methods to sustain children's interest. For example, children wear little frog hats or little duck hats when they are chosen to act out frogs jumping into a pool and ducks swimming over the hills and far away, as part of their singing and rhyme time.

Planning is very flexible as staff value and support children's ideas, deploying themselves effectively to meet their needs. For example, a three-year-old requests help with the road track and is supported by a member of staff to connect the pieces to form a circuit.

Children are confident and develop independent skills when they are encouraged to put on their own coats and help their friends to do the same. They enjoy looking at photographs of themselves which have been made into a book for them to recall past activities and outings. Children are well behaved because the boundaries are clear and staff have high expectations of them. Children can make their own choices during their play and at snack time. They sit in small, friendly groups and chat socially with each other and staff. Children are learning to co-operate and respect the toys and equipment at the preschool as they help to tidy up and put toys away where they belong.

Children speak confidently and ask questions. They enjoy looking at books and handle them carefully. Children spend time 'reading' and sharing books with friends, and can relate to favourite stories by looking at the pictures. They listen with interest at story time and then give intelligent answers to questions. However, this is sometimes difficult as the mix of ages means younger, less able children prevent the older, more able children from concentrating. Children are beginning to experiment with writing recognisable letters from their own names as they make marks in the shaving foam and staff help to extend this by linking sounds to letters. Interesting activities, such as the role play area as a pet shop and baby clinic, increase children's awareness of the different purposes for writing.

Children can recognise numbers from 1 to 10 and enjoy counting on their fingers during songs. For example, children are given frequent opportunities to count and are beginning to use basic addition and subtraction in their number songs. They count the chairs round the table to see if there are enough for the amount of children present at snack time. They correctly sort the elephants into matching colour groups as they tidy them away.

Children are able to freely access technology, such as the computer, which is left switched on for them to use whenever they wish. They are able to reflect on the passage of time when comparing themselves as a baby to themselves as they are now. Their knowledge of the environment and caring for living things is extended by staff who encourage them to water the seeds they have planted and look after the preschool hamster at home for the weekend. They wonder and speculate on the noise they can hear coming from the boat on the river as it is foggy outside.

Children develop their physical skills on a daily basis by manipulating construction toys indoors. They exercise and extend their abilities outside by running, jumping and playing on wheeled toys or on apparatus in the local park.

Children are good at recalling favourite rhymes and concentrate carefully when they produce creative artwork. They enjoy junk modelling and make 'buildings' out of yoghurt pots and cardboard packaging with lots of glue. Staff deploy themselves effectively to support children in self-chosen activities, thus maximising opportunities to further develop skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are learning about other cultures when they celebrate a variety of festivals and have access to resources that successfully reflect diversity in the wider world. For example, the dressing up clothes, books and dolls represent different cultures and also promote equal opportunities during their play and there is no gender bias. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children show good levels of confidence and self-esteem as they participate in a range of activities that encourage learning and development. They generally arrive happily at the setting, settle in well and have very good relationships with the staff, showing that they feel secure and confident. They are keen to engage in activities, negotiating with each other and staff to organise and develop their own ideas. Children's creations are valued. For example, older children in the out of school club make a dinosaur mountain which is available for the younger children in the preschool to play with.

Children with learning difficulties are appropriately supported within the setting and integrate well because staff have an effective relationship with parents and other professionals. Staff work consistently to meet each child's individual needs and enable them to reach their potential.

Children behave well because there are clear rules and age-appropriate boundaries in place. Staff use effective strategies to encourage children's understanding of right from wrong. For example, they have a smiley face hand stamp when they do things to help each other, such as helping to put each other's coats on and tidy toys away co-operatively. Staff are knowledgeable, quietly spoken and relaxed in their approach. Children are familiar with the daily routine of the session and tend to emulate the staff by sweeping up spilled sand and wiping tables as they play.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory, which contributes to children's well-being within the preschool. Staff have good knowledge of children's family background to ensure they are positively supported. Parents are well-informed about the provision, receiving information, such as the policies and procedures which underpin the service, and regular newsletters. They are invited to fundraise on behalf of the group to help pay for the annual outing. Parents are positive about this as they attend a meeting to discuss the plans. Parents are very happy with the service they receive and describe the staff as friendly, marvellous and approachable.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a well-qualified, skilful team who meet their individual needs. The staff have been appropriately vetted due to effective recruitment procedures. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the setting's policies and implement them effectively to ensure that children are kept safe and well. They continue their professional development to support the delivery of 'Birth to three matters' and the Foundation Stage.

The key worker system ensures appropriate support and care throughout the session. Staff work well as a team and clear communication and guidance allows them to provide a stimulating well-balanced programme. Their genuine enjoyment of being with the children transfers to the children and has a positive impact on their learning. Good staff ratios are maintained, ensuring children are well supervised. Staff know the children well and understand their individual needs. They plan effectively to ensure that each child is moved on through the stepping stones.

Documentation is confidentially maintained and provides parents with clear information about the setting.

Leadership and management is good. The preschool is led by a motivated and enthusiastic manager who is committed to providing and developing the service she leads to meet the care and educational needs of all the children. The policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are relevant and specific to the setting. The preschool is supported by a Foundation Stage consultant and they continually review their practice, looking for improvement where needed. The manager meets regularly with the committee, who have close links with the staff team to ensure they are supported effectively. However, the informal system to monitor and evaluate the nursery education has not been effective in ensuring that part-time children engage in all activities. There is also no way of tracking which activities children take part in. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to include the provisions' policies for supporting learning difficulties and disabilities in the information books provided for parents. These have been successfully written into the prospectus which all parents are given when their child starts to attend the setting. This means that parents are fully informed of what support is available.

They were also asked to update the child protection statement in line with National Standard 13.2 and ensure this information was available to parents. All the policies have been revised since last inspection and again this policy has been included in the prospectus.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to formalise an effective system for monitoring and evaluating the provision. This key issue has not as yet been addressed and remains an area for improvement.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 1: Suitable person. A childcare inspector visited the provision on 7 November 2006. Actions were raised and satisfactorily met by the registered provider. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- improve the procedure for nappy changing to ensure that children's privacy is respected
- pay due attention to the fire safety officer's recommendations with regard to fire doors being wedged open.

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):

- adapt the grouping of children to meet their individual needs to ensure that older, more able children's concentration, listening and speaking skills are maximised
- implement systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of early education to ensure all areas of learning are covered on a regular basis. Develop a system to track individual children.

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