

See-Saw Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306483
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Inspector	Elaine Murray
Setting Address	Moreton Road, Upton, Wirral, Merseyside, CH49 6LL
Telephone number	0151 677 7900
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Registered person	See-Saw Pre-School 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 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?

See-Saw Pre-School is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school and members of the local community. It opened in 1983 and operates from a self-contained area within St Joseph's Primary School, Upton, Wirral. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open Monday to Friday from 9.00 until 11.30 and from 12.45 to 15.15 during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 53 children aged from two to under five years on roll, of whom 44 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five staff. Four staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing physical skills and enjoyment of exercise through a variety of planned activities. They learn to use a balancing beam, and make use of a range of equipment such as bat, balls and wheeled toys in the outdoor area. Staff make use of indoor facilities to give children chances to enjoy exercise when the weather is unsuitable for outdoor play. Children have regular access to the school hall for energetic play, where they enjoy running, stretching and moving to music.

Children are developing a good awareness of simple hygiene procedures such as hand washing at appropriate times. Staff follow hygienic procedures as they clean surfaces and prepare food, helping to protect children from the spread of germs. The pre-school's clear sickness policy is shared with parents and helps to protect children from the spread of infection. All staff have up-to-date first aid training, helping to meet children's needs in the event of an accident or emergency.

Children learn about healthy eating as staff provide healthy and nutritious snacks, including fresh fruit. Drinking water is readily available for children at all times, as a jug of water and cups are accessible. This helps to promote children's good health. Children learn about the importance of keeping healthy, as staff discuss with them why exercise is important. Children show a growing awareness of how to protect their own health as they know that they need sunglasses to protect their eyes from the sun, and sun cream to protect their skin in hot weather.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which helps them feel secure. There are colourful displays of children's art work and books and equipment are visible and accessible. This helps to foster children's sense of security and belonging. The range of toys and equipment are suitable for different ages and abilities. A good variety is put out for children to play with each session, helping to meet children's needs appropriately.

Staff take positive measures to keep children safe. They make a comprehensive daily safety check of the premises which is recorded, and a written fire risk assessment is in place. However, the potential hazards from equipment, material and procedures have not been assessed in order to minimise risks to children. Children show a growing awareness of how to keep themselves safe as staff discuss with them why they must not run in nursery. Children learn to protect themselves in the event of a fire or emergency through regularly practising the fire evacuation procedure.

Children are protected as staff have a good knowledge of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and hold relevant contact numbers. The clear child protection policy is appropriately shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff establish positive, warm relationships with children, helping them to feel settled and secure. Children arrive happily at pre-school and are content. Staff follow children's interests in choosing and carrying out tasks, helping to develop children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff make appropriate use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to promote their learning. Children enjoy learning to explore and investigate using their senses as they put paint on their hands using brushes and use this to make prints. They show interest in what happens when they repeatedly tap a chalk board rubber against the board. Children's attention is drawn to photographs of themselves on display, helping to affirm their identity and sense of belonging. However, there is no clear system for observing and recording children's stage of development. This means that planning does not always focus on the next steps for their learning.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a generally good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and this is reflected in their teaching. They plan a variety of activities which promote some effective learning. Staff question children well to make them think and extend their learning. For example, children's understanding of the 'Three Little Pigs' story was checked well and children were encouraged to think about the feelings of the characters. Staff provide good support for children in completing activities, such as jigsaws and construction. Children are encouraged to express their own ideas as they use paper and drawing materials to make a picture or collage. Staff promote children's language development well as they talk to children about their activities and interests, and encourage them to express their ideas. Staff have recently introduced a new approach to planning and teaching. Although staff develop learning appropriately in their day to day teaching, at present, short term plans do not clearly show what children are expected to learn or how different learning needs will be met. This means that children's learning is not always maximised. Staff know the children well, and use this knowledge to inform assessments and planning. However, the system for observing and recording children's learning does not ensure that learning is effectively assessed in the six areas.

Children are confident to ask for resources, and to sing songs to the group. They concentrate well on jigsaws and make their own creations at the collage table. Children co-operate well at the sand tray and during role play. They show increasing independence as they pour their own drinks at snack time and put their own coats on to go outside. Children learn to recognise letter sounds in their names, and can suggest objects beginning with certain letters. They show enjoyment and understanding of books as they share books with staff or choose books to look at independently. Children confidently write or make marks on the chalk board and in the outdoor area. Children are becoming confident counting to 10 and recognise some numbers. They are encouraged to solve simple problems as they predict how many scoops of sand will fill a container. Children learn to use a computer to support their learning. They investigate what happens when they float leaves on puddles, and enjoy observing an owl brought into the pre-school. Children develop a sense of time through discussion about what the weather was like yesterday, what we did last week. Children play imaginatively in the role play home corner. They learn to explore sound using a range of musical instruments and clearly enjoy singing familiar songs and rhymes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are included in the activities provided and individual needs are appropriately met. This helps to promote children's confidence and self-esteem. Children have equal access to resources and are able to make choices in their learning. Children gain an awareness of their local environment and the diversity of the wider world through a generally good selection of resources and activities that promote positive images. Children develop an awareness of different cultures and beliefs through activities relating to festivals such as Chinese New Year. Children with additional needs are effectively included and supported. Staff work well with parents and outside agencies to meet children's needs. Children generally behave well due to staff's positive and consistent approach. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is good. Parents receive a good level of information about the setting and children's learning. The parents brochure gives general information and an outline of the six areas of learning. They are provided with further written information about the Foundation Stage of learning. Parents have chances to be informed about their children's progress as they are regularly invited in to the nursery to see assessment profiles, and receive written reports regarding their child's progress. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning through completing regular tasks with their child at home.

Staff have established positive relationships with parents. They request information about children before a child joins the pre-school and obtain relevant parental permissions. This information is used to help meet children's needs appropriately. Information about children's progress is shared informally through talks at the end of the session and regular written reports. This communication between parents and staff helps to promote children's welfare, care and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager provides positive direction and staff work appropriately together to promote children's learning. The managers seek and act upon advice from the early year partnership regarding improvements regarding planning and teaching. This approach has a positive effect on the quality of children's learning. Staff monitor the educational provision, but the current system does not ensure children's participation in activities is monitored and plans are regularly evaluated.

Staff are deployed appropriately to meet ratios and support children's well-being and development. Most staff hold relevant qualifications, which has a beneficial effect on children's learning and welfare. There are systems in place to ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on new staff. Ofsted was not informed of changes to the membership of the committee, which is a breach of regulations. However, committee members do not work directly with the children, and arrangements to promote children's care, safety and learning are satisfactory. The required records are in place, helping to ensure continuity of care for children. Policies and procedures are in place and contribute to positive outcomes for children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was required to improve staff induction procedures, ensure fresh drinking water is available to children at all times, and promote children's physical abilities in climbing and balancing. These recommendations have been met with positive effect on children's safety, welfare and 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

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 risk assessment to identify timescales and action taken to minimise identified risks
- develop the system for recording observations of children's learning to ensure that children's progress is effectively assessed (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure that Ofsted are informed of changes to the committee.

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 short term planning to ensure objectives are clear and needs of different abilities are catered for
- develop the system for monitoring children's participation in activities and evaluating planning.

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