



## Yeovil Opportunity Group

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	143103
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Mary Daniel
<b>Setting Address</b>	Balidon Centre, Summerlands Hospital Site, Preston Road, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2BX
<b>Telephone number</b>	(01935) 479879
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Yeovil Opportunity Group
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Yeovil Opportunity Group was founded over 30 years ago and has been registered since 1992. This independent pre-school for children with special educational needs operates from a purpose-built, multi-disciplinary organisation based at the Balidon Centre premises, which is situated in Yeovil. The group is a registered charity and is run by a management committee of parents, former parents, staff and interested members of the local community. Children have use of a main playroom, three smaller rooms, a sensory room, kitchen and toilet facilities. There are four separate outside play areas.

Yeovil Opportunity Group is registered to care for a maximum of 26 children aged from one to five years. There are currently 35 children on roll, of whom 25 are in receipt of government nursery education funding. The group is open Monday to Friday mornings from 9.00 until 12:00 noon, and from 13.00 to 15.30 on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, term time only.

There are 10 staff employed. A qualified teacher oversees the day to day running of the group and is supported by a senior nursery nurse, nursery assistants, volunteers and the committee. The majority of child care staff have completed recognised child care training. Drivers and escorts are also employed to manage the mini bus which transports children to the group. An administrator is employed to oversee the general management of the group. The team is supported by therapists and health care professionals on site. They also receive support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children have great fun in their outdoor activities. All children have frequent opportunities to be outside in the fresh air, where they happily climb, run and jump, or experience the feeling of the breeze on their face. They are well supported in enjoying the sensation of space and freedom to move around and explore. For example, children excitedly chase with their friends through the arches of a large wooden castle or run across a grassy area. This encourages their understanding of space and helps in developing their large muscle skills. Some children manage to pedal their ride on cars and bikes with enthusiasm, but are not always encouraged to develop these skills, for example, in controlling their speed and control in different ways. Children with more profound physical needs are actively supported in encouraging their muscle tone and stretching their bodies, for example, on a large physiotherapy ball. Children laugh as they jump with both feet together on a small trampoline and willingly attempt climbing a gently sloping, grassed hill. As a result, children have suitable opportunities to have regular exercise and use up their energy while having fun.

Children's understanding of suitable hygiene routines is very well promoted. They are encouraged to wash their hands before eating or taking part in a cooking activity. They use soap and paper towels, which helps to reduce the spread of infection. Clear procedures are followed for nappy changing and nappies are disposed of daily. Play rooms are kept clean, spillages wiped up and activity tables are wiped after use. As a result, the risk of cross contamination is minimised. Children's general physical well being is effectively supported through use of some relevant documentation and liaison with parents and involved therapists. Clear systems are in place to record details of any accidents and dietary requirements are monitored effectively. Any necessary administration of medication is clearly recorded and management staff are trained in first aid. This helps in promoting children's good health. However, parents acknowledgement of any medication given is not effectively managed, which impacts on some aspects of children's health.

Children learn about healthy eating through planned activities. For example, they help to make a nourishing vegetable soup. They have tasting sessions where they sample different foods, such as plums or avocados. During the session they enjoy a tasty snack of orange, banana, apple and raisins. Consequently, children are effectively encouraged in their awareness of foods that are healthy and nutritious. Drinks of water are available throughout the session and children help themselves when they are thirsty. Drinks are also provided at snack time. This helps to ensure children keep well hydrated and promotes their overall well being.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in vibrant, exciting play areas, which are well laid out to encourage children's mobility and interest in play. They enter the premises through an attractive entrance hallway decorated with a colourful wall mural, where photographic displays of the children involved in play activities help in creating a welcoming, familiar environment for children and their families. Careful thought has been given to planning of the outside play areas to provide children with safe outdoor play. For example, safety surfacing is fitted under static climbing equipment and gentle grass inclines are incorporated into the garden section, enabling children to safely feel differences in surface levels.

Specially designed furniture and equipment is available to support children's physical and learning needs. For example, those with less mobility are able to join their friends in activities through the use of standing frames and solid, supportive seating. A specially designed swing and frame is provided enabling all children to be strapped in securely and enjoy the movement of being pushed to and fro in the sunshine. Play resources are well maintained and exciting for children to use. There is an extensive range of activity toys that are aimed to help children of all abilities develop skills through their play. Children touch a television screen that displays a light, which they trace and follow, or they relax in the sensory room where interactive rope lights and bubble lamps help to create a calming atmosphere. Children use bright, child size cups and plates for their snacks, which encourages their independence and they wear colourful 'puddle suits' and wellingtons to go outside, which means they can benefit from fresh air and physical play in rainy and fine weather. As a result, suitable resources are effectively used to promote children's care and development.

Individual risk assessments are made for every child. This helps to identify where more supervision may be required and supports staff in planning a safe play environment. High adult ratios are maintained to provide good supervision of children. The group is supported well in managing safety issues arising through the centre maintenance staff, and are quick to recognise potential hazards, such as a leaking roof. Staff make daily visual safety checks on the main play areas before children arrive, which helps to minimise accidents. However, regular risk assessments are not formally completed to ensure all play rooms used, are kept safe.

Children's welfare is very well monitored. A child protection co-ordinator is appointed who attends training courses and procedures are in place to maintain clear liaison with appropriate agencies on any concerns arising. Written information on safeguarding children is available and the group have formed an appropriate policy to support their aims in keeping children safe.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy and very settled at the group. Staff are dedicated and provide a calm, reassuring approach to which children easily respond. Children enjoy their play and show great excitement on seeing colourful bubbles floating around and they wave their arms to try and catch them. Play experiences are planned using the Birth to three matters framework and provide a range of motivating activities. For example, children explore an inviting, cushioned

den where a range of tactile objects, such as shiny and crunchy paper, wind chimes and soft materials are available. This enables children of all abilities to develop their sensory skills within a comfortable area. Sensory objects such as mobiles, bead curtains or musical bells are put around an outside castle to stimulate children in their sight, hearing, speech and touch. Children enjoy their outside play and start to mix with their peers as they play a game of chase or kick a ball to each other. As a result, children have fun and are at ease within the setting.

#### Nursery Education.

Teaching and learning is good. Staff are committed to helping children learn through their play. Children's development is recorded through regular observations and overall, these are used effectively to monitor and plan a stimulating range of appropriate play experiences based on the six areas of learning. For example, children enjoy cooking activities. They take turns to share out ingredients and have fun squeezing, stretching and kneading the dough for their bread rolls. This helps them develop their small muscles and experience different textures of flour, water and dough. Most children use a recognised sign language and this is effectively reinforced throughout the session with staff using regular signing and use of related symbol cards. Cause and effect toys are used well to promote children's language and interest and they laugh as they post in some 'grapes' to the teddy, who makes a satisfied 'growl' and a carrot to the lion who says 'Yum, yum'! This helps children in hearing different sounds and supports their understanding of language through play.

Children are also encouraged to make their own choices through use of related sign language symbol cards and activities are carefully planned to enable easy accessibility, such as the brightly, coloured road track laid out on a low table. Children start to recognise their own needs. For example, in wanting to go to the toilet or knowing they need a coat when it is cold. They are encouraged to pour their own drinks and put on their own coats. This supports their independence and helps them develop self-care skills. Children willingly go to the garden area where they dig up some earth into their buckets. They examine a wiggly worm that appears and talk about where it lives. They paint a daffodil picture and talk about the weather, recognising when the sky gets dark it may rain. As a result, they start to learn about their natural world.

Children use stencils to draw round and they paint a picture of a face. They start to use emergent writing as they write up a favourite recipe. This gives them some opportunities to develop their early writing skills and an 'office' area is planned to help encourage children's spontaneity in using creative tools and materials. Children develop an awareness of simple technology as they use a tape recorder or torches. They push on a special pad to make an adapted battery operated pig or car work. They watch the changing, colourful lights on a television screen and in the sensory room. This also helps to develop their hand eye co-ordination and provides all children with a chance to have some control in their play. Children recognise special songs, such as their 'Goodbye' song. They enjoy hearing staff singing popular nursery rhymes. For example, children respond to 'Old Mc Donald's farm' or 'Hickory Dickory Dock' being sung as they play. They sing a 'roll it round and round' song as they try to mould their bread rolls into shape. This helps to encourage their awareness of song and promotes an interest in play. Most activities are generally timed appropriately to support children's concentration levels. However, some learning

opportunities are missed within some group sessions, such as during snacks and at times some children become restless.

Children explore a range of creative materials as they make a collage picture of 'The Bear Hunt'. They use egg boxes and pipe cleaners to make an 'Incy Wincy' spider, and show pride in their achievements. They feel different textures such as pasta, corn flour, compost or rice and show curiosity as they push their fingers through the paint. Children start to use their imagination in water play as they make a 'cup of tea' or when 'bathing their dollies'. Children enjoy hearing a popular story and appropriate resources are made available for them to act this out in their own way. This encourages children's interest in books and helps develop their imagination. Children begin to use small equipment appropriately, for example, as they push and pull the friction cars and shout out 'off they go' as they race away. Children sing counting songs and use appropriate mathematical resources to help them in number awareness. Some use their fingers to represent how many cars they have or how many friends are in the outdoor boat. Staff use some opportunities during the session to encourage number use, but overall children's recognition of the written number shape is not always effectively promoted.

Overall, planned activities are well organised and motivating for children. They are supported well in participating at their own level of ability and staff provide a stimulating play environment where children are settled, have fun and enjoy their play.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

All children and families are welcomed and included within the group. Home visits are made to help staff build friendly, professional relationships with parents and liaise on children's individual needs. Emphasis is given to encouraging family involvement and facilities for parents to have weekly coffee mornings at the centre are provided. Home link books are used to maintain regular communication and help parents to share any worries or celebrations with the group. This gives reassurance to parents and promotes continuity in children's care. Staff are very aware of children's particular individual needs and work with parents and involved therapists in providing appropriate care. Staff give clear focus to children's abilities and promote these well through the play activities provided. Every child is helped to develop a sense of achievement and a feeling of being valued. For example, they see their name and picture card on their coat peg and use photographic name cards to self-register. This helps children feel welcome and supports them in settling happily in the group.

Children are encouraged well in managing their emotions through the positive approach given by staff. Lots of praise is given, such as for helping, sitting still, looking and listening and for sharing. Clear explanations are provided as to why certain behaviour may not be nice and staff use effective distraction to prevent situations arising. This helps children in developing some sense of right and wrong. Children learn about other ways of living through some planned activities, such as those based on Africa or India. They eat Chinese food to celebrate a festival and dress up in clothes from other countries. They see positive images of multi-culture around the play rooms, which helps them accept some differences in their world, but toys reflecting disability are limited. Children are encouraged to be kind to others and they help to raise money for 'Red Nose' day as they make special cakes to sell. They share in special celebrations, such

as birthdays and Christmas. They sing their favourite 'Goodbye' song to their friends at the end of each session, which helps them develop a clear sense of belonging. Consequently, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive a friendly worded prospectus that encourages their involvement and shows an understanding of the importance of parental partnerships. Termly newsletters are issued informing parents of current activity themes and encouraging involvement with items for the interest table. Regular reviews of children's development are arranged with liaison from any involved professionals. This helps parents to share in their child's progress and contribute to their care and learning. Some information on the six areas of learning is available for parents and the weekly plans are displayed. However, overall information on the stepping stones in relation to planned activities is limited. Parents are included in the in house training sessions, such as a sign language course, and are provided with relevant symbol cards to aid communication development with their child at home. This promotes continuity in care for children and gives clear support to parents. Group policies and procedures are shared at registration and a variety of information on children's care is displayed on the parents notice board.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are cared for in a well organised environment. Space is used effectively to enable children to move around easily and provides an exciting variety of play areas, such as the inviting book corner or the well stocked role play section. Clear daily routines are established and communication symbol cards are effectively used to help children in knowing what will happen next. This supports them well in feeling secure and settled in the group. Activities are well organised and regard given to children's particular needs. For example, in a cooking activity, non dairy ingredients are used to enable all children to enjoy and participate. Suitable employment systems are followed and volunteers with the group complete relevant checks. High adult to child ratios are maintained, which contributes to the smooth running of the session, although some group activities are sometimes too long to effectively hold the concentration of all children. Required records are overall in good order and accessible for daily use, although some required parental permission is not obtained. Records are used with regard to confidentiality and documentation is securely stored.

Leadership and management is good. Clear operational procedures are established and group policies are regularly reviewed. The funded nursery education is monitored through weekly staff meetings and regular observations on children, although in some areas of learning these are limited. Staff work very well together as a team and are supported in their own professional development through induction and appraisal systems. Training opportunities are encouraged and all staff learn the sign language used by children through in house courses. Termly committee meetings are held, with the executive committee of main officers managing day to day issues in liaison with the group administrator. All involved with the group are committed to ongoing improvements for the group in their aim to promote children's care and learning needs.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection recommendations were set relating to safety and documentation. Electric plug sockets are now covered when not in use, which helps in promoting children's safety. Written permission from parents for seeking any necessary emergency medical treatment has not yet been fully obtained and consequently has been brought through as a recommendation from this inspection.

At the last inspection of the funded nursery education a point for consideration was brought through relating to promoting children's mathematical development. Numerical resources have been obtained, which help to enhance children's interest in numbers and staff provide regular opportunities for counting. For example, in counting how many children are at the table. This helps to support children in their number awareness, although there are some missed chances to extend their understanding through everyday routines, such as 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 any complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain some complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **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 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):

- request parents acknowledgement to any entries made for administration of medication for their child
- develop a suitable risk assessment system to ensure all aspects of children's safety are effectively monitored
- ensure written parental permission is requested for any necessary emergency medical treatment required for their child



### **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):

- review the use of general daily routines, such as snack time and outdoor play, to give more emphasis to all areas of children's learning, and promote opportunities to extend their existing developmental skills.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)