



Sunshine Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337415
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Inspector	Gail Groves
Setting Address	St. Marys Infant & Junior School, Dellsome Lane, North Mymms, HATFIELD, Hertfordshire, AL9 7NF
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Registered person	Patricia Bundy
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 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?

Sunshine Pre-school opened in its present building in 2006. This is a purpose-built building in the grounds of St Mary's Church of England Primary School in North Mymms near Hatfield in Hertfordshire. The pre-school previously operated for four years in a Portacabin within the grounds of St Mary's School and for the four years before that in the Memorial Hall in Welham Green. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30 during school term times only and there is a lunch club from 11.30 to 12.30 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 36 children from two to four years on roll. Of these 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs eight staff. Four of the 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 protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, appropriate nappy changing procedures prevent cross-infection, tables are wiped before children eat at them to prevent the spread of infection and accident and medication records are completed correctly so that children's health and welfare is not compromised. Children learn to understand some simple, good health and hygiene practices, such as washing their hands after using the toilet, after messy play and before eating their snack or lunch. Consequently, they are developing good hygiene routines for later life.

A variety of fruit and vegetables are provided for a healthy snack. These are cut up and laid out on a table with plates, cups and jugs of water and milk. Children can sit down and help themselves to their snack and drink whenever they wish to during the morning. A parent helper is available to help any children who require support in pouring their drink and also reminds children who have not visited the 'Juice Bar' that they should do so before it is cleared away. The pre-school provides a lunch club on three days a week and children can bring a packed lunch or have a hot meal provided by the school kitchen. This is brought over to the pre-school in a heated trolley. Staff sit with the children to encourage social skills, such as using a knife and fork correctly and sometimes discuss the importance of eating vegetables to stay healthy. Children also learn about healthy eating through planned topic work and this helps them to understand how to develop a healthy lifestyle. Children's health and dietary needs are met because staff work closely with parents. For example, details of children's particular needs are discussed with parents before children begin to attend and a list is displayed in the office so that all staff are aware of them. Staff also support parents wishes by encouraging children to eat their packed lunch and provide stickers as a reward when they do so.

Children take part in regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors and are developing good coordination and motor skills. For example, they use part of the school playground to ride bikes, scooters and trundle cars and have access to a large grassy area where they can play ball games, use a parachute and run freely. Within the pre-school's outside play area they use bats and balls, balance on logs, crawl and climb on a small climbing frame and use a tyre hung from a tree to swing. In addition, they sometimes visit the local park to use the large scale play equipment. Inside, children enjoy action songs and music and movement sessions. Opportunities to choose active play are balanced with opportunities to choose less energetic play so that children can rest if they wish to do so and do not become over tired.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment in which the risks to their safety have been minimised. For example, spills are cleared up so that children do not slip, the outside play area is secure so that children cannot leave it unsupervised and resources and equipment are stored at low level so that children can access them safely and independently. In addition, children use good quality, suitable and safe equipment which is well maintained and meets their differing needs. Staff are constantly alert to possible dangers and remind children about safety rules, such as not running inside the pre-school room or the need to use both hands to hold the hacksaw when cutting wood in the woodwork corner. This helps children to learn to keep themselves safe. Planned topics, such as road safety and events such as visits to the local fire station, develop their understanding still further. However, although staff carry out regular fire drills they do not monitor the effectiveness of their evacuation procedure after each drill. Consequently, they are not alerted to potential issues which might prevent them from fully protecting children's safety in an emergency.

Appropriate procedures keep children safe on outings. For example, a ratio of one adult to one child is always maintained to ensure that children are closely monitored. Contact details and a register of staff and children who are present on the trip are taken with the group for use in an emergency and parents are asked to give their written permission for the outing. During large group events, such as the outing to the fire station, parents are invited to be involved in order to provide the high adult to child ratio required. Children are cared for by adults who are vetted and have the relevant experience, knowledge and skills to keep them safe. For example, staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. They have attended relevant child protection training and the necessary contact details are readily available should they need to report concerns regarding a child's welfare or well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are well supported to settle and become happy in the pre-school. As a result, they are confident and eager to take part in all activities and readily make decisions, explore and investigate their environment to extend their understanding and learning. For example, they explore how to stick boxes together with runny glue, investigate what happens when they press the button on a pop up toy and decide whether they wish to play inside or outside. Staff are always interested in what children do and say and use questions and comments to carefully develop and expand children's vocabulary and language. As a result, children talk readily to them about their experiences and confidently seek their help when they need it. Opportunities to play alone, in pairs and in small groups as well as coming together for whole group activities, such as at circle time, mean that children are learning to relate well to others and are developing good social skills.

The pre-school provides a broad and interesting range of planned activities and spontaneous events which support all areas of children's development and learning. Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities for young children and provide a lot

of sensory and creative play, such as sand, water, dough and painting, to extend and develop their interest in the world around them. Children show good levels of concentration as they sit on the carpet in a small group with other young children and listen intently to stories. Staff read these with great excitement and drama and encourage children to join in with the familiar words and phrases in their favourite stories. Children have opportunities to develop their imaginations as they play in the home corner, use the dressing up resources and play with the dinosaurs in the sand. They use scissors to cut, crayons and chalks to draw and make marks and are developing hand and eye coordination and small muscle skills as they do so.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and offer ideas for play activities which are written into the plans by the managers. The topic led curriculum covers all six areas of learning and has clear links to the early learning goals. Detailed activity plans show the learning intentions, the challenges to be provided for more able children and how the activity is to be organised. Consequently, all staff can easily understand what is required and teaching is consistent. Staff use a variety of teaching methods that help all children learn effectively. There is a good mix between adult-led and child-initiated activities and practical experiences are used to develop children's understanding in meaningful ways. For example, when children are making blossom covered branches with tissue paper and twigs during a topic about spring, a member of staff brings in samples of real blossom to help them to understand what it is that they are representing with the tissue paper. Staff use open-ended questions to help children to think and to review their learning and always ensure that they have the children's full attention before starting a group activity. As a result, children concentrate well and understand what is required of them.

Staff manage children well and make extremely effective use of the available time and resources. For example, they work directly with the children for the majority of the session, prepare activities before children arrive and ensure that resources are readily accessible so that children can be independent and do not have to wait for adult help. Staff observe children and record their progress in a variety of ways. For example, each child has a book called 'All about Me' which contains photographs, samples of work and dated, written notes about what they have achieved. These are used by staff to guide their future planning and teaching in order to meet children's individual needs.

Children become very involved in their play and have many opportunities to select their own activities and to pursue their own interests. They join in readily with group activities and confidently offer information and answer questions at circle time. Children's early reading skills are encouraged as they learn to find their own name cards when they arrive and they are beginning to link sounds and letters through the use of 'Jolly Phonics' and activities revolving around the letter of the week. Resources for mark making and writing are regularly available to all children and they are encouraged to try to write their own name on their art work. Children show good counting skills and are beginning to recognise numerals. For example, they fish for numbered ping pong balls in the water trough and find a pot with the same number on it to put them in and learn to park the numbered cars in the correct parking spaces in the outside play area. They develop ideas about shape and size as they make potato prints and look at who has made the longest necklace. They begin to calculate by guessing how many items they think

have been threaded on the string and then count them to see if there are more or less than they thought.

Children learn about the natural world and their environment through planned topic work, such as looking at the seasons, learning about minibests or growing and planting in the garden. They look at natural materials, such as shells and stones, through a magnifying glass and look for worms as they dig in the garden. They develop design and making skills as they build using a variety of resources such as boxes and tubes, construction toys such as Duplo and large wooden blocks and ramps that they can then climb on. They explore what they can do with staplers, hole punches and calculators to learn about everyday technology and play with a computer to learn more complex skills. Children explore paint, glue, colour and texture in a variety of ways and join in singing sessions with great enjoyment and gusto. Their creative development is further extended through regular opportunities to experience and develop role play scenarios. Their physical skills develop and improve through a variety of experiences both inside and outside and they learn to use tools such as scissors, rolling pins and hammers dexterously.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and included and feel a strong sense of belonging to the pre-school. They develop good social skills and are learning to respond to high expectations for their behaviour. For example, staff deal calmly and consistently with any behavioural issues and discuss why some behaviour is not acceptable so that children clearly understand what is required of them. Appropriate behaviour and achievements are recognised and celebrated using praise, stickers or by being awarded a marble to put in the 'Well Done Jar'. When there are enough marbles in the jar the whole group receive a reward. This encourages self-esteem and develops children's awareness of being part of a group and of working together to achieve success. Politeness is valued and the need to share and take turns is encouraged at all times so that children become aware of their own needs and are learning to respect the needs of others. Children are able to make choices and take decisions throughout their daily routines and are developing independence. For example, they choose what colour cup they wish to use, decide when they wish to have a snack and choose what activity they wish to take part in during free play periods. Resources and planned topics, such as Chinese New Year, Diwali and food tasting, enable children to become aware of the wider community and to understand and respect the differences between people. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. The pre-school offers each new family the opportunity for a home visit from the child's keyworker and another member of staff. At this time parents are given appropriate information about the group and its provision and their child is given a simple booklet about the pre-school and what they can do there. They are also allowed to borrow a toy which they bring back with them when they start. As a result, a good relationship is developed and children are helped to feel less anxious. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their children. A home information sheet asks for details about children's favourite activities, self-care abilities and social and communication skills so that new children can be well supported during the settling in process. Staff work closely with parents to meet

individual children's needs and ensure that they are fully included in the life of the setting. For example, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided with extra adult support and parents are involved in drawing up and reviewing their child's Individual Education Plan.

Parents have some opportunities to be involved with their children's learning. For example, they can borrow puzzles from the activity library to play with their children at home and help their child to enjoy having pre-school's 'Barney Bear' to stay overnight. However, these opportunities are limited and so children's ability to make connections and reinforce their learning outside pre-school is not fully supported. Parents are kept informed about their children's achievements and progress through informal discussions at the beginning and end of sessions as well as during the twice yearly parents' evenings. When children leave the setting their parents are given a comprehensive written report and a form on which to record any written comments they wish to make in response. At the parents' evenings parents can look at their child's 'All about Me' book and talk to their child's keyworker. However, this does not readily allow parents to understand what their children are achieving and how and what the pre-school will be doing to encourage the next step in their children's learning. As a result, they are unable to fully take part in the record keeping process or to support and continue their children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Good use of time, space and staff deployment significantly contributes to children's overall development and their ability to take an active part in the setting. For example, the pre-school room is well laid out to create distinct areas for different kinds of play and learning and resources are stored in clearly labelled drawers and boxes to aid children's independence. The outside area is attractive and interesting and provides a versatile space in which staff can develop a variety of play opportunities, such as gardening, physical play and creative activities.

All of the necessary documentation for the safe and efficient management of the provision is in place and record keeping systems are used well to meet children's needs. In addition, the pre-school's policies and procedures generally work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. However, the complaints procedure does not reflect the recent changes to regulations. Parents are therefore not kept fully informed about the way the setting would acknowledge and investigate any potential concerns they may have about their children's welfare.

Recruitment and vetting procedures contribute to children being protected and cared for by staff with appropriate knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff have a formal appraisal each year and are encouraged to attend training courses in areas of interest as well as areas which will benefit the nursery. As a result, they regularly update and improve their skills and consequently the quality of the care and education they provide for children is enhanced. Staff have a high regard for the well-being of all children and form a very strong, well knit team who work together very effectively. They are alert at all times to what is happening in the group and as a result, they move swiftly and efficiently to where their presence is most needed. Consequently, children are well supported and sessions run smoothly.

The leadership and management is good. The pre-school has a strong focus on the personal development and achievement of all children and forms good relationships with parents to support that development. The setting monitors and evaluates its curriculum by assessing children's attainments and progress and regular staff meetings allow for discussion and further evaluation of planned learning activities. As the group is committed to improving the care and education it provides it is hoping to take part in the Hertfordshire Quality Standards quality assurance scheme in the near future.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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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):

- review the emergency evacuation procedures regularly
- review the complaints policy to ensure it reflects accurate information and recent changes to legislation.

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 system for sharing children's records and assessments of progress with their parents

- increase the opportunities for parents to become involved with their children's learning.

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