

Poplars Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY340388
Inspection date	21 March 2007
Inspector	Hazel Christine White
Setting Address	Water Leys Primary School, Guilford Drive, WIGSTON, Leicestershire, LE18 1HG
Telephone number	07769685416
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Registered person	Poplars 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 good. 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?

Poplars Pre-School opened in 2006. It is run by a voluntary management committee and operates from Water Leys Primary School in Wigston, South Leicestershire, serving the local community. The pre-school operates from a playroom in Block D of the school and has use of the two halls and kitchen which are situated in the main school building. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 26 children from two to eight years of age at any one time. There are currently 40 on roll. Of these, 31 four-year-olds and nine three-year-olds receive funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions and it is open Monday to Friday, from 12:15 to 15:15 and Tuesday and Thursday 8:45 to 11 :45, term time only. The setting supports children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are eight staff employed, three of whom work directly with the children at any one time. Four staff hold an appropriate early years qualification and two are in the process of completing training. The nursery receives support from the early years department of the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted because they learn to understand good health and hygiene practices. For example, tables are regularly cleaned using anti-bacterial spray and children are reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating to prevent the spread of germs. They are becoming increasingly aware of their own personal needs and staff offer appropriate support to younger children. Children are protected from infection and are taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines and procedures. There is a named first aider and three other members of staff hold current first aid certificates. Accident record and medication records are up to date and signed by parents. Emergency consent has been obtained for all children.

Children are well nourished because parents provide a good range of fruit for their snacks. They learn about healthy eating and choose from healthy options. Biscuits and other foods which are less healthy are limited. Children have their health and dietary needs met because staff work well with parents and ask questions about children's allergies, likes and dislikes. Children are offered milk or water at snack time and help themselves to additional drinks from the water dispenser. Snack times are relaxed and children are able to choose when they take their snack break. Children sit together around the table to enjoy their food and each other's company, therefore, developing their social skills.

Children enjoy indoor and outdoor activities which contribute to their physical health and well-being. They develop control of their bodies through activities, such as using balancing equipment and negotiate obstacles well when using large and small hoops. Weather permitting a range of activities are taken outside which enables children to experience playing in a different learning environment. Children move to music and participate in action songs. They learn to warm their bodies before exercising and are beginning to understand that being active makes strong muscles and a healthy heart.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment, where space is organised to ensure they can move around freely and safely. Children are able to independently access resources which have been selected by staff. Visual daily safety checks of the premises are carried out by staff, however, the process is not robust to fully ensure children's safety.

Children are cared for in a secure environment. Effective security systems ensure that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised. For example, visitors are requested to sign in and out of the premises and there are clear procedures to ensure only authorised people collect the children. Children are beginning to learn about their own safety through discussion and explanation. They regularly practise emergency evacuation procedures to ensure they are aware of where to go to stay safe. This helps children to begin to take responsibility for themselves and others.

Staff are aware of their role and responsibility to protect children in their care. They are aware of signs and symptoms of possible abuse and know the appropriate procedures to follow should

they have a concern about a child. However, staff are not fully aware of procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and separate well from their parents. They enjoy their time at the pre-school and are familiar with the daily routines. Children are keen to play and they are supported by staff which helps them to progress in their learning and development. They move freely between a suitable range of activities that are selected for them. Staff plan a balanced programme which includes, sing songs, story time, creative play and outdoor time. Children explore using all of their senses and have regular access to a range of materials such as sand, water, play dough and art and craft materials.

Children relate well to each other and have developed warm and caring relationships with staff. They are offered comfort and reassurance. Children interact with adults and they are learning to play with and alongside others. They readily engage in conversation and are gaining confidence and developing their communication skills as staff encourage their thinking. Children are frequently praised for their efforts and achievements and as a result they are motivated to learn and display good levels of self-esteem. Children are starting to learn to share and take turns.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are familiar with the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance and plan an interesting and exciting range of activities, using the stepping stones which help children develop. Activities are sufficiently evaluated and the information gained is used to make changes to future planning. The children are interested, eager and motivated to learn. As a result they are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. Staff make imaginative use of the limited space and organise activities to encourage children's choice, however, resources other than those selected by staff are not readily available. This impacts on children being able to use their initiative. Staff work well as a team and have formed good relationships with children. Children behave well because staff manage their behaviour effectively. They are developing an understanding of right and wrong because they are reminded of expected behaviour.

Observations are carried out on each child and this information is used to identify their progress towards the six areas of learning. The information is recorded on the pre-school profile. Staff however, do not take into account children's starting points and parents' knowledge of their own children. Parents do not contribute to initial and ongoing assessments. As a result, activities may not meet their learning needs and appropriately challenge individual children. There are appropriate systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff have developed good relationships with teachers, parents and other professionals which ensure all children are included in all aspects of pre-school life.

Children show confidence and a willingness to be helpful. They enjoy taking messages to school staff and respond positively when praised for helping tidy away and washing up after snacks. Children know that they must share popular toys such as the computer and they wait patiently until it is their turn. More able children manage their self-care well when putting their coats on for outdoor play. They regularly take part in activities that raise their awareness of the

similarities and differences of people and have access to a satisfactory range of resources that promote a positive view of our wider world.

Children enjoy looking at books alone and listen with interest to group stories such as 'Watch out Bernard'. They eagerly join in familiar songs and clearly answer to their name being called out at registration time. They link sounds to letters and are encouraged to notice print on displays around the room, such as, captions, signs and posters. They explore mark making in structured activities, however, writing equipment is not readily available, therefore, children's opportunities to write for different purposes are limited. Some children recognise their first name and write it correctly with well formed letters on their art work.

Children respond positively to number rhymes and confidently count up to 10 when counting the number of girls or boys that are present. Their understanding of numbers is re-enforced as they take part in routine tasks such as working out the date. Activities reflect a variety of opportunities for children to sort, match and understand shapes. More able children can identify a number of shapes and match them with objects around the room. They learn about size and position when sorting through construction bricks to build a tower.

Children learn about the life cycle of animals and the natural world. They show excitement as they examine frog spawn with magnifying glasses and understand that they become tadpoles and frogs which will need to be put back into the pond. Children have a sense of place and during circle time they are encouraged to bring in an item from home for the 'interest box'. They talk about significance of the item and their experiences with their families at home. They are developing their knowledge of technology and use programmable toys with confidence. Children use the computer mouse with skill and control and can complete simple programmes with little support. They enjoy designing and constructing using a variety of materials such as paint, collage and junk materials. Children showed good concentration as they glue cotton wool onto their Easter cards and choose their favourite colour for the flowers. Planned activities enable children to explore malleable materials including dough, sand and 'gloop'.

Children learn about changes that happen to their bodies after they have been active and know that they need to warm up their muscles before exercise. They are developing skill in control and co-ordination when using small tools. For example, scissors, glue spreaders, pencils and paint brushes. They show spatial awareness for themselves and others when joining in organised games and action rhymes. Children balance along benches, play ball games and push and roll hoops in the playground.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the pre-school because staff value and respect their individuality. Children are learning to respect diversity within the local and wider community through planned activities and toys and resources, such as dressing up clothes, books, role play equipment and dolls. They learn about themselves, each other and the world around them by celebrating a range of festivals and special days. Children recall making divas for Diwali and colouring in dragons for the Chinese New Year. The pre-school welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ensures that they can access and participate in all activities offered. Staff involve parents and liaise with teaching staff and outside agencies where necessary to learn the best strategies to help a child make progress in their development. Any specific requirements are noted to ensure they are met. This positive approach fosters children's, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children play happily and are confident, sociable and secure. Their behaviour is good and staff support younger children in sharing and taking turns. Children's understanding of right and wrong is increased as they respond to gentle reminders to care for their environment, the pre-school resources and each other. Behaviour is managed effectively with the use of praise and explanation. Children are encouraged to show consideration for others and respond positively when they are thanked for being helpful. They are listened to and the staff value what they say, which helps raise their self-esteem.

All aspects of children's individual needs are discussed and agreed with parents at registration. Staff are friendly and approachable and are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of each session, which ensures they are well informed of their children's daily events. Policies and procedures are shared with parents and available in the pre-school room.

Partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive verbal and written information about the pre-school before their child starts and are informed about current topics via the notice board and newsletters. However, they have limited involvement in their child's learning and are not involved in initial and ongoing assessments. They are sufficiently informed about the progress their children are making towards the six area of learning. Parents are invited to an annual open day and can specifically request an appointment to discuss any issues they may have.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an appropriately organised environment which effectively meets their needs and enables them to safely and independently access all areas. Activities are varied and familiar daily routines provide children with security and consistency. There is adequate space for children to relax and play in comfort.

Half of the staff team hold an early year's qualification and two are in the process of completing training. All staff regularly attend team meetings to receive current information and keep their knowledge and skills updated. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children are cared for by suitable staff. Staff are deployed effectively within the pre-school enabling children to participate in a wide range of activities. Required staffing ratios are maintained at each session and as a result, children receive appropriate support and supervision at all times. All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being are in place and is regularly reviewed. Children's personal information is stored securely, which helps to maintain confidentiality. Daily registers for staff and children are kept, however, they do not include hours of attendance, therefore, children's safety may be comprised because they are not accurately accounted for.

Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The joint managers are committed to improving and developing care and education for all children. They have identified strengths and areas of improvement in order to develop good practice. Staff work closely with the school reception teacher and welcomes support from other agencies, including the help of a teacher mentor from the Local Authority. Staff are happy, motivated and work well together as a team. Regular meetings ensure they have a clear understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

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):

- develop and review risk assessments to ensure all potential risks are minimised
- review the daily registration system for children and staff to include hours of attendance.

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 children's initiative by making resources easily accessible
- develop systems for parents to be included in initial and ongoing assessments of their child.

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