

The Playhouse Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110556
Inspection date	24 September 2007
Inspector	Hazel Stuart-Buddery

Setting Address	Cove Methodist Church, Cove Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 0EX
Telephone number	07792 936941
E-mail	
Registered person	The Playhouse Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Playhouse Pre-school opened in 2000 and operates from a church hall in Cove, near Farnborough in Hampshire. The pre-school is committee run, and members comprise of parents of children attending the provision. Children attend from the local community and surrounding areas. Children are accommodated in the main hall and they have use of an enclosed outside play area.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 19 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children who speak English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school is open each weekday morning during term-time only from 09:30 to 12:00. Afternoon sessions are available from 12.30 - 15.00 on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. A lunch time club is in operation between 12.00 - 12.30 on these days. Children bring a packed lunch from home.

The pre-school employs five members of staff who work directly with the children. Two staff members are appropriately qualified and three are currently working towards a Level 2 and 3 qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Education and Childcare Unit and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children begin to learn the importance of hygiene procedures and start to understand why they need to wash their hands at appropriate times. The spread of infection is generally prevented as children wash their hands using liquid soap and paper towels after using the toilet and before snack times. However, if children need to wash their hands between activities they share the same water and a towel. Staff gather relevant information regarding diet and medical history to ensure the individual needs of the children are met. Children benefit from daily snacks that are healthy and nutritious. Children are offered drinks during the morning, although do not have independent access to drinking water throughout the session.

Children have daily opportunities to develop their physical skills while they play outside and get lots of fresh air. They enjoy the freedom of running around and like to explore what happens to dirt when water is added. Children smile happily as they jump up and down in the puddles they have made. Staff care for children appropriately if there is an accident as all members of staff hold a current first aid certificate. All required documentation and parental consents are in place.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have plenty of space to play comfortably and can access a sufficient range of resources safely. They play and learn in a welcoming environment. Staff work hard to ensure that children have visual displays, pictures and posters, although not all are at low level for the children to enjoy. Children are kept safe by staff who are vetted and who demonstrate an awareness of safety. For example, staff ensure that the main door is always locked to ensure children cannot leave unsupervised. All visitors must ring the bell to gain entry. Staff supervise children when playing outside. Daily risk assessments are carried out to ensure all hazards are identified and minimized.

Sound child protection procedures promote and safeguard children's welfare within the setting. All staff have completed training in this area and have an awareness of possible signs and symptoms of abuse, although not all staff have a secure knowledge of the referral procedures should they have concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy, growing in confidence and most are engaged in play throughout the session. Staff work well together and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Most children are supported according to their needs. Staff interact with the children extending activities with direct involvement. For example, some children enjoy adding water to the dirt and rolling the lorries and cars in the mud. Staff extend this activity by suggesting that they

roll the cars over paper to see what prints are made. The children enjoy making prints with the cars. Children enjoy singing nursery rhymes, they are encouraged to sing by themselves and join in the actions. They enjoy singing 'Head shoulders knees and toes' and keep up with the action as they sing faster and faster.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are well organised and set out the pre-school room ready for children's arrival. Planning records show the learning focus for the term linked to the Foundation Stage early learning goals, with activities planned to allow children to develop in all skill areas. Regular, detailed observations of children's learning are undertaken by staff and observational evidence is used to plan the next steps in each child's learning. Children's records, however, are not regularly updated to clearly show children's progress across the curriculum. Children enjoy their time at the pre-school and relax as they are able to learn at their own pace. They are motivated to learn and happily separate from their parents to explore the activities set out for them. They play amicably alongside each other sharing resources, such as the small world garage and cars, and develop in self-esteem as staff praise their efforts and achievements. They demonstrate an understanding of good behaviour as they sit quietly during registration. They are familiar with the 'golden rules' of the pre-school and respond positively to staff who set firm but fair boundaries with regard to behaviour.

Children sit and practise mark making as they freely access writing resources around the pre-school room. They are developing an understanding of letter/sound links as staff use initial letter clues to help children name the day of the week. Labelling around the room and name cards help children develop an understanding of print carrying meaning. Staff use questions to make children think and encourage them to reinforce and consolidate their learning, for example, by encouraging children to count how many rings they are stacking on top of one another. Children have daily opportunities to practise their number awareness as they count the number of children and staff present during registration. They learn about the wider and natural world through planned topic work on cultures and growth. They have fun exploring different textures and notice the different marks made as, for example, they move toy cars across cornflour paste. Daily calendar activities reinforce their awareness of the passage of time. There are, however, limited opportunities for children to use information and communication technology to support their learning.

Weekly plans provide children with a variety of different activities to develop both their fine and gross motor skills. They move freely around the pre-school room and show good hand-eye coordination as they complete puzzles and carefully draw round shape templates. They have daily opportunities for free creative expression and independently paint, colour and engage in fantasy play with dinosaur figures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated fairly and with respect. They generally feel good about themselves and begin to learn about sharing and take turns. For example, some children play together in the home corner and both want to play with the sink, staff explain about sharing and taking turns, children listen well and use the sink together. Children are well behaved and benefit from praise and encouragement. They respond positively to the groups practice of giving reward stickers when children do well. Children learn about diversity through planned topics and use of

resources. Parents and outside agencies are not always used to ensure that the individual needs of all children are met. Staff foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Both written and verbal information is shared with parents about their child's educational progress. Parents can access their child's records at any time and have opportunities to comment on the records about their child's progress. Parents receive information about the group before their child starts. This includes detail on the group's behaviour management and child protection policy. A regular newsletter is sent out and parents have access to a notice board where relevant information is displayed.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children generally settle well and are happy within the group. Staff work well as a team supporting most children according to their needs. Space and resources are organised to allow children room to move around freely and safely. Staff select the resources and activities according to the curriculum planning.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. Staff work as a team to ensure they support children's individual learning. Practice is monitored and evaluated through, for example, discussion at staff meetings, although children's development records have not been closely monitored to ensure they have been regularly updated. The management have improved the pre-school's educational provision following their previous inspection but have not yet developed their outside area to provide children with more activities and opportunities to further develop their learning.

There are satisfactory recruitment procedures in place, which the committee have responsibility for. Defined roles and responsibilities of the committee are not in place and as a result some areas of the recruitment procedures are not always followed up. For example, references on some staff have not been received or followed up. All required documentation is accurately maintained. The on-going suitability and training needs of staff are discussed at annual appraisals. Staff have an awareness of the regulation changes in October 2005, with regard to the complaints procedure. Overall, the group meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to ensure an up-to-date risk assessment is in place; ensure the committee is supported and are aware of their roles and responsibilities; update all policies and procedures to reflect the full day care registration and the changes in management. The group have addressed some of the issues. A risk assessment is completed regularly and potential hazards identified and minimised to ensure children play in a safe and secure environment. All policies and procedures have been updated and reflect the current management. The improvements made help to promote children's welfare and the safe management of the provision. The group have not defined roles and responsibilities for the committee and there are still some weaknesses in this area.

The previous inspection of funded nursery education highlighted significant weaknesses in the provision. Since then children have been provided with increased opportunities and access to resources to aid their mathematical, creative, and communication, language and literacy development. Daily routines have also been reorganised so children are able to participate fully and complete activities. Recommendations previously made relating to the use of information

and communication technology and the outdoor area have yet to be adequately addressed and are carried forward for action.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 1 April 2004, Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 6 - Safety. Concerns were received in May 2006 about the safety of children. An unannounced visit took place on 6 June 2006. The childcare Inspector made observations, looked at relevant documentation and discussed the concerns in detail with the manager. As a result the following actions were set; Review and define the procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost; Develop a written risk assessment of the premises and include an action plan with timescales to identify action to be taken to minimise identified risks. An action reply slip was received with information showing that the provider has addressed the issues appropriately. We are now satisfied that the National Standards are met and 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.

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 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):

- ensure children's individual needs are met by liaising with parents and outside agencies to ensure all children are fully supported
- devise and implement defined roles and responsibilities for all committee members to ensure the smooth running of the provision.

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):

- ensure children's development records are consistently monitored and updated to show children's current levels of progress in relation to the curriculum being followed
- improve children's opportunities to use a range of information and communication technology resources to support their learning
- develop the use of the outdoor area to ensure children benefit fully from free flow play and 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