

Happy Feet Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127223
Inspection date	30 November 2007
Inspector	Beth Kingsland
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Registered person	Happy Feet 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?

Happy Feet Pre-School opened in 1994. It operates from the Ark Christian Centre in Dover. The pre-school has access to three rooms, toilets, a kitchen and an outside area. The pre-school serves the local area and surrounding towns.

There are currently 62 children on roll. This includes 45 children in receipt of nursery funding. Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The pre-school supports children with special needs. The pre-school opens five days a week term time only. Sessions are from 09.15 to 12.00 and from 12.00 to 14.45.

There are ten staff working with the children and of these six have an early years qualification and all attend short courses. The setting receives support from a special needs advisor and an advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children gain an awareness of how to look after their bodies and talk about why it is important to wash their hands before eating. They are reminded to do this by practitioners. However, at snack time this is not effectively supervised. Children wipe their noses using tissues and use individual hand towels in the bathroom areas, which helps reduce the spread of infection. They stay healthy because practitioners implement effective health and hygiene procedures ensuring good standards of hygiene are maintained across the nursery. For example, they wipe tables and changing mats using anti bacterial spray and wear disposable gloves when changing children's nappies.

Children's health is well maintained in the event of an accident as practitioners have relevant first aid training and know how to deal with accidents effectively. Secure procedures are in place to administer medication and record details sharing this information effectively with parents. Written information is obtained relating to children's medical history and parents provide written consent for their child to receive medical treatment, which helps promote their health in an emergency situation. However, although staff display information relating to children's allergies, staff are not sufficiently informed of the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions. As a result, in the event of a child having an allergic reaction, staff may not recognise the symptoms and act promptly to ensure children are safe and well.

Children benefit enormously because the pre-school provides a balanced and healthy snack. They talk about different foods recognising those that help their body to grow and taste a wide variety of fruits and vegetables at snack times.

All children have wonderful opportunities to develop their physical skills and gain in confidence using a wide range of equipment. Children play with bats and balls. They show excellent skills in riding a range of different sized bicycles, cars and scooters and have a wonderful time in the garden running around chasing after their peers. Older children become extremely competent riding vehicles in and out of obstacles and using a range of balancing and climbing equipment. They practise stretching and moving their bodies in different ways and recognise the importance of taking regular exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Consequently, children's awareness of healthy living is extremely well developed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment, which is warm, welcoming and inviting to both children and their parents. They have suitable facilities available to play, sleep and eat and benefit from access to secure and enclosed outside play areas. Children have use of a good range of equipment, furniture and play resources, although this is not used to its full potential across every session. Suitable procedures are in place to ensure this is clean, safe and well maintained.

Children's safety is promoted throughout the pre-school because practitioners have a very good awareness of safety issues and ensure risks and hazards are minimised within the setting. This is ensured as formal risk assessments are implemented on all areas of pre-school buildings and informal checks are made at the beginning and end of the day. Consequently, children are

able to move around the pre-school freely. They begin to gain an understanding about how to keep themselves safe talking about the need to ride bicycles safely in the garden and learn how to handle scissors correctly. Plug sockets are inaccessible to children and there are very effective procedures in place to protect children from unwanted visitors. There is an established procedure for emergency evacuation. However, systems to ensure children are sufficiently aware and informed, are not fully developed.

Children are safeguarded from harm because practitioners have a good knowledge of how to implement pre-school and local safeguarding procedures. They recognise their role with regards to protecting children in their care, and ensure parents are informed of this as part of the registration process. Systems to record staff, children and visitors to and from pre-school are secure and identification is requested from all visitors, which helps to keep children safe. Secure procedures are in place to ensure their safe arrival and collection. Consequently, children are protected whilst in the care of pre-school practitioners.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled within the pre-school. They establish secure trusting relationships with practitioners who know them well and enjoy playing with their peers. Young children snuggle in with practitioners, developing a strong sense of belonging, sharing cuddles and play 'peek a boo'. Younger children become skilful communicators responding using gestures and words to questions asked. They copy isolated words and develop their language skills because practitioners are highly effective in the way in which they talk with children as they play. Children enjoy expressing their imagination pretending to cook dinner and playing shops. They become competent learners as they dress-up and become imaginative characters.

Interaction between children and practitioners is extremely positive throughout the pre-school. Practitioners recognise how children learn effectively and fully involve themselves in their play. They skilfully adapt their approach, according to the individual needs of the child, and make good use of play opportunities to extend children's learning and increase their language development. Practitioners have begun to implement new systems to observe children's development, linked to the Birth to three matters framework, although this is not yet fully developed. For example, links between planning and information gained from assessment are not in place, which impacts on the learning experiences provided for children.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make sound progress because practitioners know their capabilities extremely well and recognise how young children learn effectively. The organisation of the day provides plenty of opportunities for children to engage in self chosen play, as well as spending time in small groups. Consequently, they play an active role in their learning and are engrossed in their play. Children enjoy building models from a range of construction materials and negotiate with their peers how they should fix the train track together. They are encouraged to solve their own problems, for example around size and shape, when completing jigsaw puzzles, and recognise and compare different shapes.

Children are encouraged to be independent, learning to dress and undress for physical activities, and helping to prepare snack. They count confidently and begin to compare numbers and have many opportunities to recognise letters and words around their classrooms. Children's understanding of weight and measure is promoted through planned activities, for example,

they use a variety of sized cups in sand and water play, discussing how many they need to fill a container. Children play number games with practitioners, which develops their understanding of mathematical concepts.

Children develop very good communication skills and use a rich range of vocabulary to describe what they are doing. Practitioners are extremely effective in the way in which they introduce new vocabulary to children through play and encourage them to sound out letters and sounds when they attempt to write their names on their work. Practitioners provide a designated, 'writing area', where children can select from a range of writing media. However, children are offered, 'worksheets', which limits their ability to express themselves independently. Staff make use of these sheets to teach the children early writing, however, these opportunities do not meet the individual needs or capabilities of many of the children.

The children join in enthusiastically with group story sessions, joining in with the actions and re-telling the events as they unfold. However, opportunities for children to use and enjoy books independently are weak. They are not stored effectively to allow easy access as they are piled on top of each other in a wooden unit, with most children enjoying to climb into the unit in preference to selecting books.

They confidently use the pre-school computers delighting in the programmes and confidently using the mouse and the keyboard. The pre-school has a good range of resources promoting children's investigative skills. However, access to these are restricted, which impacts on children's ability to develop their curiosity and investigative skills for themselves across the session.

Practitioner's support children's imaginative play well, providing them with a range of opportunities for role and free play. They provide resources, which help to stimulate children's imagined ideas, such as the shop, home corner and dressing up clothes. Children scream with delight pretending to be a, Daddy,' and participate enthusiastically in singing and music sessions. They enjoy creative activities and use a range of media, textiles and materials, such as sand. However, art activities tend to be pre-prepared, prescriptive and adult-led, which impacts on children's ability to explore creativity for themselves.

Children engage in a good range of planned activities and experiences, although the system for planning is not fully developed. Staff know children's abilities and use effective teaching techniques to help support their individual learning. However, the system for planning and assessment is not sufficiently secure to ensure children receive sufficient challenge. Information gained from assessment is weak and does not show children's ongoing progress towards the early learning goals. Practitioners do not use their knowledge of individual children to help plan future learning experiences and there are currently no links between planning and assessment. Whilst many aspects of teaching are very good, systems to ensure children are able to achieve their individual potential are not fully developed.

Children are extremely confident with the daily routine and begin to develop their understanding of time. The pre-school have a very good range of resources and equipment and children have access to this across each term because it is built into their planning. However, the organisation of space and accessibility of some resources impacts on children's ability to access the full range of equipment through independent play. Consequently, although children are happy and engaged in their play, opportunities to extend their independent learning are not fully promoted across the pre-school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children develop high levels of self assurance and confidence because they are cared for by practitioners who know them extremely well. Their behaviour is good and they know what is expected of them. Children talk about why it is important to look after their toys as they help pack away, which helps develop their sense of responsibility within the pre-school. Children develop a strong sense of belonging, and this is enhanced by the effective deployment of practitioners. Practitioners introduce children to behaviour boundaries telling them to 'play nicely' when they snatch toys from one another. Their older peers talk regularly about how it is kind to share and take turns with their friends.

Children are encouraged to recognise and value their own and other's strengths and achievements, which helps boost confidence and self-esteem. They gain an understanding about themselves and others through discussions with practitioners, stories and playing with equipment reflecting diversity. Children are introduced to a range of traditions and customs, and special events and cultural festivals are incorporated into the planning. For example, they taste Chinese food and practise using chopsticks as part of Chinese New Year celebrations. They talk about their families, recognising the differences and similarities between their home life and how other people live. Children increase their awareness of the wider world through activities linked to topics. However, they have fewer opportunities to learn about their local community and surrounding area.

The pre-school promotes a fully inclusive environment and has very strong systems to support those children with additional needs, ensuring progress is made and consistent strategies are implemented. Every child is treated and valued as an individual. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children settle well and secure procedures are in place to obtain information about children's individual routines, which helps ensure consistency between home and pre-school. Children are exceptionally well supported by practitioner's who are sensitive towards their needs and this support is extended to the whole family. Children thrive during their time at pre-school because secure links are in place between home and the setting and friendly informal relationships are established between parents and practitioners. Parents are well informed about nursery policies and procedures. Policies are in place to record and act on any complaints received by parents. However, procedures have not been updated in line with current legislation.

The partnerships with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents are helped to understand how their child learns through play because written information about the curriculum is included in the nursery prospectus. Weekly play plans are displayed and parents receive monthly newsletters advising them about topics and activities their child will be involved in. They receive ongoing information about their child's achievements through informal daily discussion and meetings with their child's key workers. This provides an opportunity to discuss children's progress and share samples of their work. However, systems to share evidence and discuss children's progress towards the early learning goals are not fully developed due to weaknesses in the way children are assessed.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit because practitioners work extremely well as a team and share the same vision. Secure systems are implemented to ensure effective communication takes place between practitioners, for example through formal meetings and daily discussions. As a result, sessions run smoothly and operational issues are quickly addressed. Children's care and learning is enhanced because practitioners have a good understanding about child development and have appropriate qualifications and experience. However, procedures are not in place to recruit, appoint and induct new practitioners. The current system used is not robust or sufficiently rigorous to ensure children are fully protected.

Leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. Practitioners have an overall understanding about the Foundation Stage curriculum and recognise the links between children's play, planned experiences and the areas of learning. However, their understanding of the stepping stones and how to use these to promote learning across all aspects of the session are not fully developed. Practitioners meet weekly to plan activities linked to pre-school topics, however only two members of staff take responsibility for the writing of the plans. As a result this limits all staff to make effective contribution to the full planning of the curriculum. They evaluate sessions informally, although systems to monitor and evaluate planning and the impact this has on children's individual progress are insufficiently secure. As a result, some aspects of the curriculum do not feature regularly enough, which impacts on children's learning in these areas.

Children's health, safety and well-being is promoted because practitioners have a good knowledge and understanding of most of the policies and procedures and ensure these are implemented in practice. Documentation is well maintained and reviewed regularly and the required records are in place, although some lack the required detail. Secure systems are in place to maintain confidentiality storing records securely, and effective procedures are implemented to share most of the documentation with parents.

Management recognise the strengths within the pre-school and have a good understanding of some of the areas for development. They review staff performance and development on a regular basis and training is actively encouraged, which impacts on the experiences offered to children. The dedication and commitment of management and practitioners is reflected across the pre-school. As a result, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to, review and update policies, records and procedures and make them readily available to parents, develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and develop the use of the outside area. Progress in all aspects has been good. Policies and procedures have been developed and staff work effectively to ensure they are implemented in practice. Children are safeguarded from harm because practitioners have a good knowledge of how to implement pre-school and local safeguarding procedures. Staff make very effective use of the outdoor play area and children relish the opportunity to play freely.

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

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 there are vigorous and robust recruiting procedures in place
- ensure all staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of children's allergies
- ensure children are confident and familiar with the procedures for emergency evacuation
- update the complaints policy in line with current 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):

- develop the programme of communication language literacy to allow children greater opportunity to use and enjoy books and engage in practical activities to develop their early writing skills
- review the use of space and accessibility of resources to improve children's access to the full range of equipment across the session. Make effective use of the environment to ensure children experience a broad and balanced range of activities that support their developing skills
- continue to make effective use of assessment to identify children's next steps in learning and to inform the planning of activities

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