

South Hill Park Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119301
Inspection date	19 April 2007
Inspector	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
Setting Address	Leppington, Birch Hill, BRACKNELL, Berkshire, RG12 7WW
Telephone number	01344 860555
E-mail	Enquiries@shp-preschool.co.uk
Registered person	South Hill Park 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

South Hill Park Pre-School was established in 1974 and moved to its current premises at Leppington in Bracknell, Berkshire in 2000. The pre-school occupies a purpose-built building within fully enclosed grounds. Children have access to three areas within the building and an outside play area that is equipped with large fixed play equipment. There are also suitable kitchen and toilet facilities provided. Children attend from the immediate community and surrounding areas of Bracknell. The pre-school is registered as an educational charity and is run by a volunteer management committee. The committee is usually made up of parents, ex-parents or interested individuals.

The pre-school operates from Monday to Friday term-time only and offers both morning and afternoon sessions. Morning sessions operate from 09.05 to 11.35 and afternoon sessions from 12.30 to 15.00. A maximum of 30 children from two to under five years of age may attend at any one time. Generally, morning sessions are attended by two and half to three year olds and afternoon sessions by three to four year olds. There are currently 85 children on roll from two to four years of age. Of these, 59 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting

welcomes children with learning disabilities and/or difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six members of staff, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is also an office manager who assists during sessions as part of her early years training.

The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority early years team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

All aspects of children's health are promoted very effectively through the implementation of consistent good practice and routines, and staff knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibilities. Children play in a clean and hygienic environment that is well maintained. Staff clean the toilets, Hoover the rooms and generally ensure that the premises are as equally inviting to those children who arrive for the afternoon session as it is for the morning. Children are supported in developing good awareness of the importance of washing hands at appropriate times, such as before eating. Older children confidently talk about when they have to wash their hands and explain that this is 'to wash the germs away'. Children independently access the bathroom area to wash their hands. The provision of paper towels restricts the potential for cross-infection and foam soap in a child appealing dispenser encourages children to use soap. The local health visitor recently visited the setting to talk to the children about the importance of washing their hands and she brought along an ultra violet detector which allowed them to see how effective they had been.

Children enjoy healthy snacks in accordance with the pre-school's promotion of healthy eating. Food is purchased daily to ensure that it is fresh and does not pose any potential health risk to children. Several members of the staff team have attended food hygiene training and they wear aprons when preparing food. Staff seek relevant information from parents about children's dietary requirements. Children have the opportunity to attend the group's lunch time club. This enables them to enjoy the company of other children and adults at a meal time and to further develop their independence skills. Parents are encouraged to abide by the pre-school's healthy eating policy when choosing items for their children's lunch boxes. Children have free access to drinking water at all times and independently help themselves to a drink of water as and when they feel thirsty. Some children are beginning to recognise the effect of exercise on their bodies as they rush to help themselves to water when they come indoors after outside play.

Children especially enjoy playing outside which allows them to be physically active and benefit from fresh air. They excitedly announce that they can go outdoors and several children state that this is what they like best. Children decide whether or not they feel they need to wear coats and some take off their sweatshirts as they begin to feel too warm. The pre-school's outside play area offers children scope for climbing as they explore the wooden climbing apparatus and slide and climb up the ladder to the upper floor in the play house. They competently manoeuvre a selection of wheeled toys, changing direction and adjusting speed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The pre-school premises are well-organised; they offer a bright and cheerful environment and enable staff to easily view all areas. There are good levels of natural light and staff ensure that the rooms remain at a comfortable temperature. Space is used constructively in terms of the presentation of activities. Clear walkways allow children to move freely and easily around all areas. The rooms are decorated with examples of children's artwork, posters and good use of labelling, both in English and other languages.

Children stay safe because staff supervise them carefully. They learn to avoid accidents and keep themselves safe as staff set clear boundaries; for instance not allowing children to run indoors and as they use situations that arise to draw their attention to potential hazards. A member of staff explains to children that she is sweeping up spilt sand 'because we don't want anyone to slip over'. When children become a little over enthusiastic whilst playing at the sand tray and a child gets sand in his eye, they are reminded of the need to be careful. Good security and fire safety precautions contribute to children's overall safety. Staff control access to the premises and implement effective arrival and collection procedures to avoid the possibility of children leaving unescorted or unnoticed. Visitors to the setting are required to record their presence. Children regularly practise fire drills to develop their understanding of the procedure they should follow in the event of it being necessary to evacuate the premises. Daily safety checks are undertaken which identify most potential hazards. Staff make use of appropriate safety features to minimise areas of possible risk, such as socket covers, heater guards and stair gates. There is a broad range of toys, furniture and equipment available, the majority of which is in good condition. However, one of the chairs that the children use when accessing the computer has a ripped seat cover and the foam filling is exposed. Toys are accessible and children independently choose their own activities. Labelling of boxes with both words and pictures allows children to easily see what is available.

Children are protected because there are clear policies and procedures for safeguarding children. Most members of the staff team have attended child protection training to enable them to develop their knowledge and understanding about the signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect and how to act on any concerns. Staff are aware of who has designated responsibility for child protection. Parents are informed of the group's responsibility with regard to child protection via the setting's welcome pack.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thrive in the vibrant, lively atmosphere of this pre-school. They enjoy their time and remain very well occupied, making their own decisions about what they do as they move freely around. Staff provide a well presented learning environment with an interesting range of resources that cater for all areas of learning. There is a strong focus on learning through play, in particular during the morning sessions, and sessions are characterised by laughter and conversation. Children and parents are warmly greeted on arrival, with most children entering well. Staff take the time to explain to children what activities are on offer and use simple pictures as an aid to communication. Some new children are a little unsettled but staff are conscious of this and provide support and comfort as necessary. The new 'shop' is extremely popular with everyone and children spend lots of time 'shopping' and packing their chosen items away in shopping bags. Children enjoy playing at the sand tray and experiment filling different containers with sand and turning these out. They investigate the different tools

provided, including everyday household utensils such as sieves and potato mashers. Painting is a popular activity as is creating pictures using the range of collage materials provided. Children like playing outside and they move freely between the garden and the pre-school room as they come inside to fetch objects to support their play. Most members of the staff team have attended Birth to three training and this is used to plan suitable activities for younger children and to monitor their progress and achievements.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children are actively involved in their own learning. They are enthusiastic and become engrossed in exploring those resources that interest them, for example playing with the sand, threading and collage work. They play co-operatively with others and enjoy good opportunities to develop their independence and self-help skills. For instance, as they pour their own drinks and carry plates of food over to their table at snack time. Children's behaviour is generally very good. Staff use positive strategies to help and reinforce children's understanding of the expectations for behaviour. For example, they frequently discuss behaviour at circle time and the provision of a toy that individuals hold when they wish to speak at whole group times helps everyone appreciate the need to listen to others and aids their understanding of developing respect for others.

Children engage freely in conversation with others. They often choose to spend time looking at books and staff respond to this interest by ensuring that they sit and read to them. Children explore writing for a variety of purposes in meaningful contexts. They have access to different mark making materials and use these freely, for instance to make shopping lists. Children begin to recognise their written names through consistent daily routines. Everyone is encouraged to add their name label to the group's Welcome Board and they also look for their name cards at snack time. Some children write their names using recognisable letters whilst others make marks with the encouragement of staff. They explore pattern as they clap out the syllables of their names and develop awareness of letters through the 'letter of the week'. Children enjoy story time and during the afternoon session in particular, they benefit from the staff's good use of questioning which encourages children to think and to express their views. However, the organisation of some morning story time sessions does not fully support the needs of some more mature children.

Children negotiate space well, both indoors and outside. They develop their fine motor skills as they manipulate a range of one-handed tools with increasing control, for instance paintbrushes and scissors.

Children confidently use mathematical language as part of their play and as they discuss their ages and how old they will be on their next birthday. More able children competently count up to 10 and beyond, for example the number of children present during the session although they are not encouraged to develop their skills further. Children count the number of children sitting at their table at snack time and then go to fetch the appropriate number of cups or snacks they need. However, staff tend to pre-empt this by handing over the exact number of cups needed or a plate containing the correct number of snacks which limits opportunities for children to consolidate and develop their problem solving skills.

Children have opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through such activities as exploring the concept of floating, cooking, using magnifying glasses, watching caterpillars change into butterflies and growing plants. Children enjoy digging holes in the garden to plant the sunflower seeds they have grown and talk about the need to water them

so they will grow. A member of staff responds to a child's interest in an 'ice pack' for sale in the shop and they fill an ice cube tray with water and place this in the freezer to see what will happen. Children enjoy using the computer and many competently use the mouse control as they select different programs and complete these.

Children play imaginatively with others. They have access to well presented role-play areas; for example the home corner and the new shop. Children play with playdough in the home corner and make 'food' and they enjoy 'selling and buying' the provisions provided in the shop and talk about the cost of items. The presence of an interested adult who joins in, for example by acting as a customer and modelling appropriate language, effectively supports their play.

Staff develop knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum through training and they plan for all areas of children's learning. The planning system currently in use is under review, with the purpose of simplifying it. All staff regularly observe children and keyworkers monitor children's achievements and progress. Individual play plans, which are shared with parents, identify the next steps in children's learning and this is used to inform future planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated as individuals and with equal concern as staff take positive steps to meet their needs. For instance, they recognise that some new starters are learning to separate from their parents and they provide lots of reassurance, for children and parents alike. Children have access to a variety of resources that reflect positive images of some aspects of diversity and help them gain awareness of the wider world in which we live although there is little available to promote their awareness of disability. Children are introduced to their own and other cultures through planned activities throughout the year. Staff display children's artwork and they provide a magnetic board where children can display their pictures for the duration of the session if they so wish. As well as creating a welcoming environment for everyone to enjoy, this approach also helps children understand that their efforts are valued. Children with additional needs or English as an additional language receive appropriate support to help them achieve. Staff appropriately foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children behave generally very well and staff act as very positive role models for children's good behaviour. Everyone presents a calm demeanour and they consistently help children feel proud of themselves and foster their self-esteem through a lovely use of praise. Staff set clear boundaries for behaviour, based on promoting safety and respect. They issue these to parents, who in turn, are encouraged to talk to their children about the reasons for these. Children are reminded about the importance of sharing and turn-taking and staff intervene immediately, where necessary, to explain the unacceptability of some actions.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are welcomed into the pre-school at the start and end of sessions and are encouraged to help settle their children. They are provided with a range of information about the pre-school through a variety of sources. For instance, all new parents are issued with a welcome pack and they are invited to attend an induction meeting. Additional information is provided via newsletters and noticeboards. Parents are informed of the term's topics and the letter of the week although staff do not display planning records so that parents can find out the purpose of the activities on offer and they do not receive any information about how they can support children's learning at home. Parents are aware of the development records staff keep on their children; they receive written reports on their progress and have regular meetings with keyworkers. Parents have opportunities to share

in the life of the pre-school by adding their name to the parents' rota or by joining the group's management committee. Parents speak very highly about the pre-school and the staff caring for their children. They feel confident to speak to the staff team and find them friendly, helpful and approachable. They feel their children enjoy attending the group

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. Committee and staff work well together to provide a stimulating and welcoming environment for all children and their parents and carers. Effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that those adults caring for children are suitable to do so and that children are protected from unvetted persons. New staff are supported by means of induction and mentoring and the setting has just devised an updated staff handbook to underpin practice. Appraisals are held annually to support staff professional development and identify individual training needs. The importance of ongoing training is strongly recognised both by individuals and the committee. Staff deployment is good and as a result, sessions flow well. All are aware of their roles and responsibilities and everyone works hard to meet the needs of the children they care for.

All legally required documentation is in place, well-organised and kept securely. Confidentiality is assured. The setting has had regard for the latest amendments to the criteria to the National Standards (October 2005) and has revised its written complaints procedure accordingly. A comprehensive record is kept of any feedback received from parents together with full details of how the provision has addressed any issues or reviewed existing practice. The pre-school works hard to evaluate existing practice and identify areas for future development through a reflective approach and positive attitude. All staff have opportunities to contribute to this process as do parents via parental questionnaires and feedback forms for new parents. Any suggested areas for development are considered and changes made where possible. This demonstrates a commitment to the continued improvement of care and nursery education for all children attending the session and a keen desire to offer a high quality service to families.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Three recommendations were made at the setting's last care inspection which took place in 2003. These required the pre-school to consider re-organising the morning story time session, to ensure the suitability of all cleaning materials and the safety of the mesh at the side of the outside shed. Suitable measures have been implemented in respect of the health and safety issues identified, which benefit children. Some attention has been given to addressing the issue of the morning story session. Currently, on three days of the week children are split into separate groups for story time. However, this arrangement has not been extended to each day although the matter is under consideration. On some occasions, when all children are grouped together for story time, it is difficult to equally balance the differing needs of all the children, who are at differing levels of maturity.

There were no key issues identified at the pre-school's last nursery education inspection although points for consideration recommended the extension of opportunities for children to freely express their own creativity in art activities and further chances for children attending the morning sessions to attempt to write their names. Both these areas have been addressed well. Staff consistently encourage children to have a go at writing their names, for example on

their paintings. Children show interest in attempting this, whether by using correctly formed letters or marks meaningful to them. Children have access to a variety of resources and materials, stored at low level that they can freely explore in any way they wish. For example, when painting, some children use brushes whilst others use their hands and they mix colours together. Children decorating large letter shapes are provided with lots of shiny, glittery items and are allowed to be as extravagant as they wish with these.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 01 April 2004 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 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):

- enhance existing monitoring procedures to ensure the safety of all furniture used by children
- enhance the existing range of resources that reflect positive images of disability.

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):

- make greater use of opportunities that arise as part of the daily routine to build further on children's number awareness and to enable them to develop their problem solving skills. Ensure greater consistency in the organisation of the morning story time session to balance the differing needs of the children present
- develop further the partnership with parents by investigating ways of providing them with information about the learning objectives of the activities on offer and how they can support children's learning at home.

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