

Woodcote Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	133702
Inspection date	15 June 2007
Inspector	Margaret Davie
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Registered person	Woodcote Pre-School Group
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?

Woodcote Pre-School Group opened in 1966 and is run by a management committee made up of current and previous parents. It operates from the Village Hall in Woodcote, a small village north of Reading. The pre-school has access to three rooms and a sleep room. There is no secure outdoor area, however children use the neighbouring play park and go on regular outings in the village.

The pre-school is open from Monday to Friday from 09.15 to 15.30 during term time only. It also runs an early bird and breakfast club from 08.30 during opening times. A maximum of 37 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 56 children aged from two to under five, of these 31 children receive funding for nursery education. Most children come from the surrounding area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with disabilities and learning difficulties.

The pre-school employs 12 staff of whom six hold a relevant early years qualification. Of these, two staff are working towards further qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a clean environment where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene. Staff follow effective procedures to monitor hand washing in order to prevent the spread of infection and ensure the nappies of the younger children are changed regularly to help maintain their good health.

Children learn about the importance of healthy eating because they are offered fresh fruit at snack time, which they help to prepare. Meals are nutritious and cooked on the premises, taking any special dietary requirements into account. Children occasionally eat vegetables they have helped to grow on the allotment, which helps them to recognise foods that are good for them. Drinks are offered to children at regular intervals during the day but they do not have free access to drinking water at all times.

Children do not have access to a secure outdoor area; however they visit the neighbouring play park regularly, where they use a range of equipment including slides and roundabouts to develop their balance and coordination. Outings within the village give them the opportunity to walk and enjoy the fresh air. They are keen on visiting the pre-school's allotment, where they enjoy gardening and tending the plants, using watering cans and a selection of small tools appropriately. Children use a range of equipment in the hall, including ride-on toys to develop their physical skills, when the weather prevents them going out. They move appropriately during music and movement sessions. Children develop satisfactory fine motor skills using a range of small tools, rolling and cutting play dough and using pencils to write appointments when playing in the hospital.

Children's good health is not fully supported by the arrangements made for them to have a rest after lunch. Although there is a sleep room with appropriate equipment, it is not used regularly, and instead, children watch a television programme for a short time, before getting on with a more lively activity. Children are appropriately cared for in the event of an accident or becoming ill. Seven staff have undertaken first aid training and the required medical records are in place.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a spacious, well organised environment. This allows them to move around and play safely. Three rooms are used for play, one of which is particularly bright and airy, overlooking the village green. Rooms are made welcoming and appealing with brightly coloured resources and colourful displays of children's work. Children have easy access to suitable toys and equipment, which are labelled to help with their early letter recognition. Most areas are safe, however electrical plugs are not routinely covered to ensure the risk to children is minimised.

Staff deployment ensures that children are supervised appropriately. Staff are vigilant about protecting children from harm, reminding them to carry equipment safely and not to stand behind the doors in case they get hit if they are opened from the other side. Arrival and departure procedures ensure children are kept safe, however the premises are not secure and

there are no clear procedures to ensure staff are aware of the whereabouts of people who enter the building.

Children stay safe on outings because staff ensure there are always sufficient buggies, reins and extra adults to keep them free from harm. Staff talk to children about road safety, and the importance of looking out for cars in this rural area where there are no traffic lights to help them cross. Children are familiar with the safety rules when using the play park, chanting 'up the ladder, down the slide' when they observe one child attempting to go up the slide instead of the ladder. Staff are able to deal with emergencies on outings because they always take a first aid box and carry a mobile phone to get help if necessary. However children's contact details are left in the village hall, which means that parents could not be contacted in an emergency if there was no access to the building.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy playing and learning. They take care of sick dolls in the hospital and practice early writing skills when making notes and appointments. They learn how to recognise and match colours and numbers in matching games and enjoy being creative while singing and dancing. Children listen to stories enthusiastically and join in when singing simple songs such as 'Baa, baa, black sheep' or 'Incy, Wincy Spider'. Children experience satisfactory access to the world around them on outings to the local shops, church and their allotment.

Children are confident and enjoy good relationships. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework appropriately to plan activities for younger children. Younger and older children gain positively from being together in the afternoon when numbers are less. They learn to communicate and share toys and resources amicably. Children receive appropriate support to develop their confidence and self esteem from staff who listen to them carefully and encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings in order to encourage their use of language.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a range of activities in all six areas of learning. Children's access to activities other than those set out for them on a day to day basis is however sometimes limited, for example, on some days there is no painting or craft table, which restricts their opportunities to develop their creativity. Occasionally children's learning is not extended because staff do not intervene in activities appropriately, in order to develop learning fully, for example when children model with play dough. Recently, staff have started to use post-it notes to record assessment information, however current records lack illustrations to clearly demonstrate the progress children have made. As a result children's learning is not always extended appropriately.

Children behave well most of the time and play cooperatively. They understand the rules of the setting and usually follow them. This ensures good relationships and harmony. They willingly tidy up and help with nursery routines when given the opportunity, such as helping to prepare snacks and setting out plates and beakers at snack time. These opportunities are not always used sufficiently well to extend children's learning. Children learn to recognise their name by looking for their name card when they sit down to have their snack. There are some opportunities for them to develop their early writing skills, and the oldest are learning to form recognisable numbers and letters in preparation for their transition to primary school. Children's number

skills are developed by making use of every day situations such as counting the number of children present at registration, encouraging them to think about whether there are more girls or boys and learning about measuring while baking fairy cakes. Children enjoy learning about the world around them by going on walks around the village and tending their plants at the allotment, some of which they have grown from seed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children acquire suitable attitudes toward diversity as they have access to resources such as dressing up clothes, books and pictures reflecting people from different backgrounds. Celebrating festivals such as the Chinese New Year helps them to understand how special days are observed around the world. All children participate in the activities provided, some with extra adult support if needed, and in this way staff ensure they all have equal access to all opportunities. Children and their home routines are known well and as a result their individual needs are met appropriately.

Children are polite and learn about responsible behaviour because staff use positive and generally consistent behaviour management methods. They are gently encouraged to apologise if their behaviour is unacceptable and appropriately praised when they do. Children have opportunities to learn about the world around them on their outings to places of interest within the village. This fosters their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties are supported well. Their needs are well planned for because staff liaise closely with parents and outside agencies. As a result these children make good progress.

Children benefit from the positive relationships between the pre-school and parents and carers. Parents indicate they are happy with the care their children receive and feel that staff are very approachable. The atmosphere between parents and staff is friendly and this helps build children's confidence. For children receiving nursery education the partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff provide appropriate information about the nursery education in newsletters or in the displayed planning documents. Progress is discussed with parents before their children transfer to primary school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting is currently undergoing a change of management and all staff are working together as a team to make this transition as smooth as possible. Children's overall development is satisfactory because staff have an appropriate sense of purpose and provide suitable activities. Occasionally they are busy with tasks, such as preparing snacks or tidying up, and therefore distracted from their involvement with the children. Children are supervised appropriately; however staff are not fully aware of the risks to children due to the lack of a secure entry to the village hall.

Children benefit from qualified and experienced staff who are committed to attending further childcare training in order to help them monitor and improve the quality of care and education they provide. Staff have attended first aid, child protection and food hygiene training to ensure suitable understanding in these areas. Children's welfare is suitably provided for as all

documentation required for the safe and effective management of the nursery is in place. As a result, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The quality of leadership and management for nursery education is satisfactory. Staff are working to improve assessment recording systems and the way assessments are used to ensure planned activities meet children's individual needs. However, they have not identified inconsistency in staff practice which limits children's opportunities to develop some aspects of learning. Staff have generally made appropriate improvements since the last inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the pre-school make available to parents details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint, and to make parents aware they are giving consent for seeking emergency medical advice and treatment. The contact details for the regulator have been updated on the complaints procedure and registration forms now state clearly that parents are giving their consent for emergency medical advice and treatment. These changes ensure that staff are working together with parents to promote children's health and welfare needs.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that the pre-school provide regular opportunities for free, imaginative and creative expression during sessions, allowing children to choose, explore and express their ideas and feelings freely. Children benefit from more regular opportunities for imaginative and creative expression through art, dance and other activities however there is still scope to plan for these opportunities more consistently.

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.

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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):

- ensure children have free access to drinks during the day
- ensure children's contact details are taken on all outings

- minimise potential risks to children by ensuring all electrical plugs are protected and by developing a system to alert staff when a visitor has entered the premises

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):

- continue to develop systems to record ongoing assessments and to use these when planning activities to ensure that all children's individual needs are met
- improve teaching to ensure methods support all children to learn as much as they can
- ensure that activities for children allow them access to a broad range of experiences across the Foundation Stage curriculum

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