

Amber Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113356
Inspection date	05 June 2007
Inspector	Helen Penticost
Setting Address	Scout Hut, Amberley Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 4LN
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Registered person	Amber 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?

Amber Pre-school has been registered since 1994. It is managed by a committee and provides sessional care. The pre-school is located in the Scout Hall in the Roffey area of Horsham, West Sussex. The pre-school have access to a hall and kitchen and toilet facilities. The group have access to a grassed outdoor area and a hard standing area for outdoor play in the winter months.

The group is registered to provide 16 places for children aged between two and five years. There are currently 31 children on roll. This includes seven funded three year olds and 16 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Pre school sessions are from 09:30 - 12:30 on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On Tuesday sessions are 09:15 - 11:45 and 12:15 - 14:45 during term time only.

There are currently 12 staff members working within the group which includes bank staff. Of these, six have a relevant childcare qualification. The setting has close links with the local schools.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy and are protected, because the pre-school follows effective health and hygiene guidelines and procedures. Children learn the importance of hand washing routines and clearly understand about why they must keep their hands clean. Children increase their independence and personal care successfully through consistent daily routines and support from the staffing team. Effective systems are in place and are implemented to reduce the risk of infection and prevent the transmission of communicable diseases. For example a clear sick child policy is in place and paper towels and anti- bacterial soap are provided. Most staff have up to date first aid certificates and there is an easily accessible first aid box. All of the required documentation to support children's health is in place. As a result, children receive appropriate care if there is an accident.

Children's dietary needs are met very well as they enjoy their varied healthy snack. Staff have a good understanding of each child's individual needs and work closely with parents to ensure they have a healthy and nutritious diet. Parents are actively involved through the groups 'snack attack' scheme. The organisation of snack time promotes children's independence and self confidence as they help to prepare their wholesome snacks. Children have access to fresh drinking water allowing opportunities for children to self select.

Children develop a positive attitude to exercise and participate daily in activities helping to increase their understanding of the benefits of rigorous play, activities and fresh air. They ride and manoeuvre wheeled toys in the outdoor area and use the climbing apparatus for example, the slide with good control and co-ordination. Older children are experiencing physical education sessions to help prepare them for starting school. Children enjoy using malleable materials such as play dough and they use the tools with skill as they roll and cut shapes. They also enjoy using a variety of small world toys which help develop their small muscle movement.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well organised, welcoming and child orientated environment. The premises are maintained in a suitable state of repair and staff carry out daily written risk assessments, which helps to keep children safe. The organisation of resources and equipment means that children move around safely and independently access available resources on offer. They spend time concentrating on self-chosen and self initiated activities which are supported well by the staff. Children enjoy playing with a wide range of good quality resources and participate in a broad range of activities which help them to progress in all areas of their development.

Safety hazards within the pre-school have been minimised. There is a good security system in place for the safe arrival and departure of children and to protect children from intruders. Children are kept safe whilst moving around the pre-school because the staff are well deployed and provide children with good levels of supervision. Children are developing a good understanding of the importance of keeping themselves safe because of the gentle but firm reminders from staff members and they use items such as scissors with care.

Children are well protected because the staff team understands their role in safeguarding children. Staff undertake appropriate training and are familiar with the appropriate procedures to follow, should they have any concerns about a child. Effective procedures advise parents of their responsibility and all relevant documentation is available to support children's care and welfare needs. This ensures the pre-school acts in the best interests to safeguard the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children enjoy a stimulating, bright and welcoming child centred environment, in which they have opportunities to enjoy free flow play and focus activities. The good range of resources and effective planning of activities, provide many opportunities for children to enjoy and achieve through meaningful play. The staff work to the Birth to three matters framework to ensure that the needs of younger children can be met. Children take part in and learn from a very good range of activities that are stimulating and well balanced, suitable for all ages and which include a good balance of quiet and active games. Children are interested in the activities available and spend time concentrating on self-chosen or self initiated activities which are supported very well by staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn, this is reflected in the environment and the programme of activities. Planning provides a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning and reflects children's understanding, starting points and the community the children come from. The qualified and experienced staff extend activities effectively. An effective observation and assessment system is in place which works well for staff and supports them in drawing up effective and meaningful plans which are clearly linked to children's individual needs and their progress and development. The methods of teaching provide challenge and staff have realistic expectations and support children to enable them to achieve as much as they can.

Children are becoming confident learners as they move between and ask to join in the activities. They approach staff to talk to them and ask for help when needed. Children show extended concentration and pleasure in many activities, for example making a hairy head and playing hairdressers. They listen attentively to staff and follow instructions well, for example when asked to come together for circle time. Children behave very well and are building good relationships, greeting each other with pleasure, sharing and taking turns well and negotiating well. They appear confident and play with other children well, some forming strong friendships. Children are gently reminded to talk one at a time and listen to each other, for example at circle time when sharing news from home. Children benefit from the wide range of books in the welcoming and comfortable book corner where books are stored at child level and are easy for them to access. Children enjoy stimulating stories either read with staff and two or three children, independently, with friends, or as a larger group. They know to handle books correctly, turn pages carefully and show interest in their content. The children confidently sing nursery rhymes on their own in front of the whole group.

Children have the opportunity to count simple number operations and undertake simple calculation during planned activities but they are not given these opportunities during everyday activities. Children learn about positional language and shape recognition in every day stories.

The group have a shape and a colour for the week and this is discussed at every register time. Children are developing a sense of space as they move around the pre-school and make sufficient space for everyone to see the story book. Children demonstrate good design skills as they have access to a wide range of resources to allow them to design and create their own pictures. Children learn about the natural world as they plant seeds, watch them grow, then harvest them. Children enjoy many opportunities to enjoy free role play developing their imaginations. Children learn about their senses in themes, activities and stories. They learn about handling different textures and materials as they participate in day to day activities.

Children are making good progress in relation to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals in all of the six areas of learning. Children are working well within their limits and enjoy activities which are stimulating, imaginative, and provide sufficient challenge for all children to develop an understanding of new ideas and their developing skills effectively. The good quality planning of the curriculum provides an interesting and varied programme for the children to enjoy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are supported well as they play and staff recognise them as individuals, encouraging them to feel valued at the pre-school. Children show good levels of confidence and independence which staff promote. Children are becoming aware of a wider world and increasing their awareness of diversity through the wide range of resources, planned activities and celebrations. Children are treated with respect, helping them to feel good about themselves and become confident learners. They show a strong sense of belonging, developing their self-esteem as achievements are celebrated by displaying their work on the walls.

Children behave very well and are encouraged to play and work harmoniously with others. The effective strategies used are understood by children and shared with parents to enable nursery and parents to work in partnership. Incidents of behaviour are quickly managed by the staffing team as they work closely with the children and the children are given explanations as to why their behaviour is unacceptable. Children become aware of their own needs and the needs of others because of the excellent example from the staff and the caring and nurturing environment. Staff are consistent and clear about boundaries and rules, helping children to think about their own safety and the effects of their actions. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive good quality information on the service on offer however, the complaints policy does not include the correct contact details of the regulator should the parents wish to make a complaint. Staff utilise all opportunities to involve parents in their child's learning. For example, book borrowing and 'snack attack' schemes are in place which helps to strengthen the partnership between home and the pre-school and enables children to see staff and their parents as equal partners in their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by experienced qualified staff who have been appropriately vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with young children. Staff retention is good, providing consistent care for children and parents, consequently staff work well as a team and contribute their ideas to enable them to offer a diverse range of activities. Space is well organised and

children move freely between the different learning and play areas. Staff are well deployed in each room allowing children to receive appropriate adult attention.

All regulatory documentation is in place although the system for registering children and staff needs to be improved. Policy documents are made available to parents and information regarding Ofsted is displayed. All children's records are stored confidentially and securely.

The leadership and management of the pre-school are good. The effective leadership and management of the pre-school and the educational programme enables children to make good progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff are positive in their roles and work together extremely well. The pre-school team have definite aims about how they wish to develop and improve outcome for children. Staff are supported closely by a committee which enables close links to be formed with the local primary schools and teachers. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection three recommendations were raised. These were to obtain parents' prior written permission to seek emergency medical first aid or advice, to include the regulatory body of Ofsted in the complaints procedure and to record times of arrival and departure for all children staff and visitors. The group now request written permission for seeking emergency treatment as part of their child record form and contract. The regulatory body is included in the complaints procedure however the address and telephone number are incorrect. The system for registering times of arrival and departure has been implemented although it needs to be improved.

At the last Nursery Education inspection, the provider was asked to improve the quality of role play and small world provision so that children's activity is more purposeful and sustained, develop effective opportunities for children to use their own writing systems and develop an awareness of the many purposes of writing and to extend planning to ensure that the needs of individual children as identified through the thorough assessment system are covered so that individual children are always appropriately supported and challenged. Positive steps have been taken in all of these areas to ensure that children's learning is enhanced.

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 that the complaints procedure includes the correct address and telephone number of the regulator.
- improve the system for registering children and staff 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 the use of number and simple calculating within daily activities.

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