

Spring Road Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131561
Inspection date	14 May 2007
Inspector	Coral Hales
Setting Address	Itchen Scout Hall, Spring Road, Sholing, Southampton, Hampshire, SO19 2NZ
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Registered person	Spring Road 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?

Spring Road pre-school opened in 1982 and operates from the scout hut in the Sholing area of Southampton. It is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and serves the local surrounding area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The setting is open each weekday morning during term time from 09:15 to 11:45 and additionally from 12:30 to 15:00 on Wednesdays. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 36 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 34 receive funding for early education. It is the policy of this group to accept children from the age of three years. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend and are well supported by the staff.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the local authority and from a pre-school development worker.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through discussion and by following daily routines which focus on independence skills and keeping them healthy. They know they must wash their hands before handling food and after using the toilet, in order to stop germs spreading. Children's health is promoted because effective health and hygiene procedures are followed, for example the tables are wiped regularly and staff ensure all areas used by children are kept clean. Effective measures are taken when children are ill so that their health is protected and emergency consent for treatment/advice is maintained. Their welfare is promoted because staff respond to accidents appropriately, as current first aid certificates are held.

Children are appropriately nourished and are provided with nutritious snacks. They enjoy for example, a variety of fruits, vegetables, crackers and toast. Milk and water are provided for the children as they sit together for snack, however water that they can access at any time is not available. Children are encouraged and supported well as they learn to prepare their own snack of crackers and spread and pour their own drinks. The children begin to learn about healthy living through discussion, sometimes supported by activities.

Children enjoy a good range of physical exercise and have many opportunities to develop their physical skills in the garden. They confidently use a range of large and small equipment and show increasing coordination as they balance on bucket stilts, thread ribbons on the gate, climb on the 'Caterpillar' and join together with staff to use the parachute. Children are happy in the garden and are continually interested and motivated in their play and staff join in enthusiastically. During a heavy rain shower children were heard to say "oh do we have to go in, we are having fun in the garden?"

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well supervised and cared for in premises that are generally safe, secure and suitable for their purpose and they are able to access suitable facilities easily. Most safety measures are in place to protect the children, for example the main doors are kept locked, and the exits are monitored as children are collected at the end of the session. Risk assessments are carried out, however these are related to buildings generally and are not individual to the premises and do not identify all hazards. For example, the garden has some areas that require to be made safe with reference to the weeds and brambles and some storage radiators in the hall become very hot, are not covered, and therefore children are potentially at risk. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as they take part in regular emergency evacuations, are gently reminded not to run indoors and to be aware of others as they play in the garden.

The pre-school equipment is in good condition and meets the needs of the children. They independently select from the broad range of safe, stimulating and good quality play equipment set out around the room. Activities and toys are attractively presented to help children to learn to respect and look after the resources that they play with. Colourful and attractive posters and displays are situated appropriately and are fully accessible to the children.

Children are well protected. Their welfare is safeguarded and promoted through current policies and procedures. Staff are secure in their knowledge about child protection and recent training

has been attended. They are aware of their responsibilities to the children in their care and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice. However they are not fully secure in their knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are at ease with the environment and staff, enabling them to feel confident, which is conducive to their play and learning. They develop their independence well as they hang up their coats, find their friends and decide what to play with first. Children are occupied and involved and interested in their learning and are provided with a good range of stimulating activities and learning opportunities. The key worker system works well and allows individual staff to develop good relationships with their key children and the parents. Children make good progress because staff are knowledgeable, very supportive and know when to interact and when to stand back to let play develop. Children who are new to the pre-school are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive towards their individual needs. Close and caring relationships with the staff increases children's sense of trust and feeling of belonging. They are given opportunities to play independently and with their peers and as a result have a positive attitude to learning.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Well-planned stimulating activities promote children's interest and participation. Staff base these on their knowledge of individual children and their current level of development and understanding. Activities are suitably modified or extended according to individual children's abilities. Children work productively because staff have created a fun working environment, and children ask questions and make decisions. They can work individually or undertake adult directed activities such as making undersea creatures to go on the display board. Staff are skilled at maintaining a good commentary about what is happening and provide children with new vocabulary, for example, after marble painting a fish a child noticed the shape left in the tray and staff explain about the 'outline'. Written plans generally cover all areas of learning whilst being flexible enough to allow children to follow their own interests. There is a good balance between adult and child-led activities which allows children to learn at their own pace. Very effective systems are used to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and to plan experiences that help children to take the next step in their learning. These observations are comprehensive and interesting and are valued by parents.

Children have a positive approach to their learning and many show high levels of concentration as they play. For example, they sit for prolonged periods creating space models and making buildings from small shaped bricks. They begin to form good relationships with others and are given a warm welcome by staff. Children show interest and curiosity in their play and are keen to join in with all activities. Their self-esteem is effectively promoted as they develop good self-care skills and they begin to take on simple responsibilities, for example helping staff to tidy away or as they help to create a display deciding where to place their pictures. Children are generally confident in their interaction with staff and can express their ideas clearly and fluently. They have many opportunities to develop their early writing skills as they trace, draw undersea creatures and write their names on pictures. Children have a good understanding of the letters in their name and many can sound out and spell their names. Most listen to stories and are encouraged to use books carefully and group story time is generally enjoyed by children,

for example they listen and join in with 'Commotion in the Ocean'. However the size of the group does not meet the needs of all the children and can prevent their learning being extended.

Children develop an interest in shapes as they play matching games and recognise the same shapes on the poster and as they build with bricks of different shapes. They count spontaneously in their play and during songs, for example 'Alice the camel has five humps' and enthusiastically join in with the actions. They learn about bigger than, more than, less than as they sort beads, teddies and seeds. Children discover the world around them by investigating natural objects, for example as they observe and create models about the lifecycle of frogspawn and as they look at different seeds and plant sunflowers. They learn about undersea creatures as they play in the water tray and one child gleefully identifies in words the 'popopus'. Children gain an awareness of the world around them as they experience different festivals, for example, Chinese New Year that enables them to learn about other peoples beliefs and customs. They learn about simple technology as they use programmable toys, use the computer and complete programmes linked to the theme and when using role-play equipment.

Children enjoy using their creative skills and imagination whilst playing with the musical instruments, when singing and when exploring different colours and textures. They paint and create undersea creatures using marbling techniques and create models from boxes and self-select from a good range of resources. They make good progress because their senses are well stimulated, for example through different experiences with soft modelling material, which during the inspection was scented. Children move with confidence around the play areas negotiating obstacles with ease. Their physical development is enhanced by the good range of varied outdoor equipment available to develop their climbing and balancing skills. For example, they use bucket stilts with increasing skills and climb onto, over and along the caterpillar and all really enjoy using the parachute. The children handle tools and objects and play with construction sets and show good control and coordination.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to a good range of resources and activities planned to promote a positive view of the wider world. They take part in a variety of festivals, for example Chinese New Year when they work together to create a large dragon. They gain knowledge and experience of different customs by participating in a range of planned activities. Children begin to relate to others and gain some awareness of the needs of others around them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are valued and respected as individuals and their needs are well documented and implemented. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in the life of the pre-school because staff work closely with their parents and actively seek advice from other professionals in order to offer good support to the child.

Children's behaviour is good and their understanding of right and wrong is increased as they respond to gentle and sensitive reminders to care for each other, and for the resources. They play happily together and share and take turns and respond well to the staff's praise when they are polite or helpful.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They value the friendly and approachable staff. They are provided with a range of information about the pre-school and topics and themes, and how they can support children's learning at home. Regular parents meetings, informative

progress records and written diaries are used to keep them up-to-date with their child's achievements. They speak positively and knowingly about the setting and the staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the effective organisation and management of the pre-school. Familiar routines help them to feel secure and includes a good balance of activities and indoor and outdoor play. Space is well organised and staff to child ratios are high. This allows children to receive individual attention from staff, for example to extend their learning or to reassure those who are less confident. The organisation of the session is generally good, however some large group activities for example, story time do not fully meet children's needs. Policies and procedures are clear and well implemented to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement. Children are well protected as these systems are confidential and well organised, with emergency information to hand. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and Management is good. The committee, the supervisor and her staff have clear aims for the continued improvement of the quality of care and education for children. Good communication helps the experienced staff work closely as a team supporting each others practice. Effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitable and appropriately qualified. A new appraisal system has been developed to monitor staff's development and to highlight any training needs.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care inspection report recommended that staff should review and further develop some policies and procedures. These related to lost children, parental information about the complaints system and written permission for seeking emergency medical advice/treatment. They were also to ensure that the register contained times of arrival and departure of children and staff. All recommendations except for the information about the complaints system have been met and ensure parents are better informed and that children's safety and welfare is maintained. The issue relating to the information about the complaints system has been partially met, however this will form part of a recommendation from this inspection.

The last education inspection report highlighted the following issues: more opportunities to be provided for children to use everyday technology; and access and use the book corner more regularly. Staff reviewed their resources and planning to ensure that children develop a good understanding of simple working technology and use books regularly. This enables children's learning to be better promoted and extended. Staff were also asked to provide parents with opportunities to record their comments about their child's learning. New communication books were created and this system works effectively and children benefit from the exchange of information. The report also commented on the need for a formal staff appraisal system to be set up to monitor staff and their practice. This has been created and will be introduced to the committee and staff shortly.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 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.

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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 policy contains correct information and that staff and parents are aware of the new complaints guidance and of the procedures to follow
- ensure that the risk assessment system is further developed to ensure that it highlights all concerns relating to maintaining children's safety (with reference to the radiators not being protected and the garden having areas that are not suitable for children to use)
- ensure that water is available to children at all times throughout the session

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):

- review planning and organisation of the session to ensure that large group activities for example story-time, meet children's needs and allow for their learning to be extended.

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