

Sway Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109842
Inspection date	23 April 2007
Inspector	Helen Mary Ball
Setting Address	Middle Road, Sway, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 6BB
Telephone number	01590 683154
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Registered person	Sway 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?

Sway pre-school opened in 1970 and operates from a dedicated room in the village hall. It is situated in the Sway area of Hampshire. A maximum of 14 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 09:15 to 11:45 for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 17 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 10 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local catchment area. There are no children currently attending who have learning difficulties or who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs three members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being are effectively underpinned by the maintenance of accident and medication records, together with supporting policies and procedures. However, medication records lack some detail. Children are well protected in the event of accidents because staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications. Children learn effective hygiene routines and they understand the importance of washing their hands before snack time. However, soap is not easily accessible and this means that children need assistance when washing their hands; this compromises their independence.

Children's physical health is effectively promoted because they play outside every day. Children use a good range of indoor and outdoor play equipment, which provides them with suitable physical challenges. They move confidently around the environment and play outside on cars and bikes. When the weather is poor, staff plan physical activities indoors so that children's health is promoted. Children understand the effect of exercise on their bodies and talk about feeling hot when they have been walking.

The pre-school actively promotes healthy eating and provides a selection of fruits and breadsticks for the morning snack. Children sit together at tables, and this makes snack time a pleasant sociable experience for children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly and are relaxed in this small friendly group. The environment is bright and colourful, and the music playing in the background creates a harmonious atmosphere. Children benefit from an enclosed outside play area which has ample shade; this means that children can safely play outside when the weather is hot. Children play with a suitable range of toys and resources which are rotated daily to provide variety. They particularly relish playing outside on the reasonable range of bikes and cars, which are suitable for children's ages and stages of development. Staff actively seek children's opinions when purchasing new equipment and children are currently saving their five-pence coins with a view to buying more outdoor equipment, which the children will choose from educational catalogues.

Children's safety is protected because staff supervise children closely. The premises are secure and effective evacuation procedures are in place. Risks to children are minimised because daily risk assessments are made within the setting.

Children are safeguarded because staff understand the signs and symptoms of child abuse, and have procedures to follow in the event of concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive at the pre-school and settle quickly; they are enthusiastic in their play and they have fun. Children are encouraged to make choices about their play, and staff ensure that children are aware of what is available. Staff have realistic expectations of young children, and sensitively allow new children to explore the environment without unnecessary demands placed

upon them. Staff understand when children need support and when they want to work alone, and this helps children to develop self-confidence and self-esteem. Staff have an abundance of patience and are good role models. Children follow their good example, and are polite and eager to please. Early communication skills are extremely well supported through high quality interaction as well as knowledge of individual children. Staff show great enjoyment and satisfaction in watching young children explore and develop; their love of working with children shines through, and this means that children thrive in their care.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are excited and inspired by the broad range of activities offered to them. They access a range of good quality resources which support their development across all areas of learning. Children are eager to learn, and take an active part in choosing what they will be doing. Children are keen to offer their own ideas and show good levels of curiosity and independence. Children chatter while they play and enjoy talking to staff and each other. Children learn that print carries meaning, and they enjoy using their writing skills in their play. For example, they write lists, parcel labels and postcards in their role play when they imagine they are going on holiday. Children show a real love of books and stories, and enjoy sitting together with staff to share a story. Most children can recognise their names in print, and some can write their names. Staff encourage them to label their art work, so that children learn that writing is for a purpose.

Children develop an understanding of counting, adding and subtraction during everyday routines such as registration, snack time and lunch time. They learn about shapes and staff are skilled in recognising children's individual learning styles; they understand that some children prefer to learn in a practical manner. For example, staff place shapes in the sand and talk to children about the properties of shapes whilst building houses with diggers. As a result, children show an interest in shape and talk about whether their house will be a square shape or a rectangle.

Children are excited and eager to learn about the wider world. This is a small rural group, and staff take every opportunity to take children on walks to explore both the local area and the wider environment. Children record their walks on the digital camera, and delight in sharing the photograph albums. Children relish their longer journeys, when staff take them on the train to Brockenhurst. Staff are skilled at building on children's interests and provide a rich role play area, where children recreate journeys and talk about going on holiday. Staff understand children's continuous play, and are skilled at allowing them to use all areas of the provision. Children line up chairs to make a train, and then pretend that the book corner is a plane. Staff extend children's thinking by asking open questions, and joining in with the play. The freedom to fully explore their imagination without restriction significantly enhances children's learning. Children learn about the natural world, and show a genuine care for living things. For example, they observe a cocoon and remind staff that when it hatches, the butterfly must be free to fly. Children are confident in using technology; they use the computer and mouse competently, and benefit from calculators, clocks, cameras and telephones in the role play area.

Children delight in their creative play. They make sense of the world in the role play area, and they delight in designing and making 3D models. Staff are exceptionally skilled at sensitively supporting children, enabling them to build models with a clear sense of achievement at the end. Staff allow children time to complete their model to their own satisfaction, and this gives children a feeling of a job well done.

Staff find out about children's skills and interests right from the start and use this information to help children achieve as much as possible. Staff know the children very well, and this means that children are enabled to progress at their own pace. Staff are exceptionally skilled at observing children and they strike an effective balance between allowing children to develop relationships with each other, and questioning children during their play to challenge their thinking and language skills. Staff use their observations to monitor and record children's achievements, although the assessment recording is not consistent and does not always show children's next steps in learning. However, the detailed staff knowledge of each child means that the inconsistent recording does not adversely affect children's learning. Staff regularly evaluate the planning documents to ensure that children receive a broad and balanced curriculum, and this is an area under continual review. Overall, children make good or better progress in their learning and achieve well, given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's self-esteem is high because staff offer consistent, relevant praise and encouragement. Staff value what children say and do, and this builds children's confidence. The setting welcomes children with additional needs, and staff have links with external support agencies to ensure that children's needs are met. Children's behaviour is good. They are eager to please and willingly help staff and each other. Staff are excellent role models, and children follow their good example. Children show care for each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. They are welcomed into the group on a regular basis and a parent rota ensures that parents can help when possible. There are effective induction procedures and parents/carers are welcome to stay with their children until they settle. Parents report that staff are approachable and friendly, and are openly positive about the setting. Staff communicate freely with parents, both verbally and through the home-link book. This ensures that children receive continuity of care. Parents receive regular newsletters, and have opportunities to discuss their children's progress through the stepping stones at regular meetings, which means that parents and staff can agree children's next steps in learning. Overall, children greatly benefit from their parent's involvement; this contributes significantly to their good health, safety, learning and development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

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

Staff work well as an established team, and this ensures seamless care for children. Children are safeguarded because the setting has appropriate recruitment procedures and all staff are qualified to NVQ Level 3. Children benefit because staff know children well, and this means they develop strong relationships with children. As a result children feel secure. Resources are organised so that they are accessible to children, and space is arranged so that children can move without restriction. However, hand washing facilities do not promote children's independence. Children's health and welfare is underpinned by the maintenance of appropriate documentation, although some lacks detail.

Leadership and management is good. An active management committee supports the supervisor. She leads a consistent and dedicated staff team, who are supportive of each other. The supervisor

and staff frequently use staff meetings to evaluate and monitor the provision, and to plan a broad curriculum. The supervisor and staff continually strive to improve their provision; they evaluate activities, and are proactive in initiating changes so that children's learning is enhanced. Although written assessment records are not consistent, this does not impact on the quality of children's learning because this is a small setting where staff know individual children's capabilities. The pre-school receives support from the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting was asked to improve assessment of children's progress to ensure the planned curriculum supports individual children's progression along the stepping stones and is delivered at the right level. Although assessment records are maintained, these are not consistent and this remains an area for improvement. However, this does not impact on children's progress because staff know individual children well.

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to ensure that all documentation relating to procedures and records is updated, to keep staff and parents fully informed. The policies and procedures were updated in January 2007, and are available to staff and parents. This means that children receive consistent care.

The setting was asked to improve hand washing routines and facilities. Although children can now reach hand basins and toilets independently, they are unable to reach soap. This means that staff help children to wash their hands, which compromises children's independence. This remains an area for further development.

The setting was asked to improve understanding and implementation of the special educational needs Code of Practice. The Supervisor is the designated Special Needs Co-ordinator, and the group receives support from the Area Special Needs Co-ordinator. This means that the group has suitable support in place, should a child require additional provision.

The setting was asked to maintain security of the premises at all times. The premises are now secure and staff ensure that there can be no unauthorised access to children. The outdoor area is fully enclosed, and staff keep the external door locked during session times. Children are supervised when using the toilets, so that they cannot access other parts of the building.

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):

- improve hand washing facilities, so that children can access soap and wash their hands independently (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure that medication records are countersigned by parents following administration

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 children's assessment records so that children's capabilities are reflected and are used to plan children's next steps in learning
- continue to develop the planning so that it is meaningful to staff and successfully promotes all children's progress through the stepping stones

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