

Heathlands Community Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251516
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Inspector	Gill Thornton
Setting Address	C/O Broke Hall CP School, Chatsworth Drive, Rushmere St. Andrew, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 5XD
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Registered person	The Trustees of Heathlands Community 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Heathlands Community Pre-school is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school and members of the local community. It opened in 1980 and operates from a dedicated portacabin situated in the grounds of Broke Hall Primary School in Ipswich. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during term time only from 09.00 to 11.30 and from 13.00 to 15.30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 59 children aged three and four years on roll. Of these, 58 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local catchment area. The pre-school supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children's health is not adequately promoted. No member of staff holds a current first aid certificate, consequently there is no member of staff on the premises with up-to-date knowledge of first aid, so children are at risk in an accident or a medical emergency. Appropriate procedures are in place to request parents' consent to administer medication, however, written records are not effectively maintained of any medicine administered to children, so posing a risk to children's health. Written parental consent is requested to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and an appropriate record of any accidents is maintained and countersigned by parents, to ensure they are informed of any minor bumps or injuries sustained at the pre-school.

Children are provided with a drink at snack time of either milk, water or squash, however, they do not have free access to drinking water throughout the session to ensure they do not become thirsty. Staff are careful to ensure children's individual dietary requirements and preferences are respected. Children sit down together to share a snack that usually consists of a biscuit or savoury snack and some slices of fruit. Staff follow appropriate procedures while preparing food in the small kitchen area, however, no member of staff holds a food hygiene certificate to ensure they are fully aware of, and compliant with, regulations relating to food safety and hygiene. Children generally follow appropriate hygiene practices, such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before snack time and staff remind them to use the soap to wash away the germs.

Children enjoy daily access to the large outdoor play area in dry weather. Here they enjoy playing with a wide range of equipment to help promote their large physical skills, such as pedalling, balancing, crawling and climbing, or running about enthusiastically with their friends. They sometimes go for walks round the school field, discussing the environment and collecting items of interest to them. Children have many opportunities to develop their small physical skills and demonstrate increasing control while using various construction kits, mark-making tools, threading activities and using small hammers and tacks to develop their hand to eye coordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure indoor environment. The door is kept locked during sessions to prevent unauthorised access and staff follow appropriate procedures to monitor children's arrival and departure. Staff supervise children closely to promote their safety and ensure toys and equipment are used appropriately. The gate to the large outdoor play area is padlocked prior to children going out to play, however, effective action has not yet been taken to repair a gap in the fencing to ensure it is fully secure. Staff carry out visual safety checks and take appropriate steps to minimise children's risk of accidental injury.

The premises are well maintained and welcoming, with appropriate child-friendly facilities to promote children's independence. Children have access to a suitable range of toys and equipment which meet safety standards. Fire safety precautions are in place and emergency evacuations are practised with the children, although these have not been carried out recently to ensure everyone is fully aware of what to do in the event of a fire.

Children learn about keeping safe through planned events such as road safety role play activities. They understand safety rules and remind each other not to push when lining up to go back indoors. Children are cared for by suitable staff, some of whom have attended child protection training, and they are aware of the correct safeguarding children procedures to follow if they have a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and well settled and form good relationships with staff and each other. On arrival they immediately become involved in activities that interest and motivate them. They soon understand the familiar routines of the session which helps them develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff generally have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They understand children's needs and provide an appropriate range of play and learning experiences to interest the children attending. Planning is based on topics and provides activities across the six areas of learning, however, there are minor deficiencies within some aspects. For example, opportunities to learn about everyday technology or to explore media and materials do not feature regularly in the everyday curriculum. Short-term plans identify daily resources with some basic learning intentions and include some focused activities. However, these do not include any adaptation or grouping of children to take account of their individual stages of development to ensure children are provided with sufficient levels of challenge to ensure they all make good progress.

Teaching is appropriate for most children and staff make good use of open-ended questions to extend children's learning and develop their thinking skills, such as asking them how they think magnets stick together. Staff interact well with children during their play, listening and responding to their interests and making good use of praise to help children develop a sense of achievement. For example, praising a child's skill at completing a difficult jigsaw puzzle. The pre-school has just introduced a system of key workers who are responsible for maintaining children's assessment records. These highlight children's progress through the stepping stones and include brief observations on Post-it notes. However, the information gained from these assessments is not monitored or evaluated to identify children's next steps in learning, to inform future planning or to ensure activities build upon what children already know.

Staff are generally well deployed throughout the session and make satisfactory use of their time and resources to support children's learning. Children are sufficiently confident and self-assured to play independently or in small groups, sharing ideas and negotiating with their peers. Children understand the routines of the session and they respond well to staff's high expectations of acceptable behaviour. Staff encourage children to develop their self-care skills when going to the toilet and they take turns at being helpers at snack time. However, the organisation of snack time limits children's opportunity to learn to take responsibility for their own needs and develop future independence and there are missed opportunities to develop children's understanding of good health and hygiene practices.

Children have many opportunities to recognise and write their own names, such as at the writing table, naming their work and when using the large blackboard. At snack time staff regularly ask each child in turn to name and sound the initial letter of their name, which most do

confidently, but then they have to sit and wait while every other child does the same. Children enjoy looking at books and sharing them with staff or each other. Staff encourage children's mathematical development well, making good use of opportunities to help children develop their simple problem solving skills and they encourage them to use mathematical language during their play.

Staff plan a range of craft activities which the children enjoy, but these tend to be very adult-directed without the opportunity for children to freely explore their own creativity. Children enjoy engaging in imaginative role play activities based on their own experiences and they make good use of the available resources. Staff sometimes plan different role play situations, such as a hairdressers to extend children's ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the group, staff respect their individuality and ensure they have access to toys and equipment to meet their individual needs. Children have access to resources, such as books and dressing-up clothes, which reflect a positive view of peoples' differences and similarities. Staff are aware that some children may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure children's additional needs are met.

Children behave well. Staff use consistent strategies of expected behaviour and use praise and encouragement to promote good behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are learning right from wrong and to show care and concern for others. Children participate in festivals such as Christmas and Chinese New Year to help them gain an understanding of the wider world.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Information is shared verbally with parents on a daily basis to ensure children's changing needs are met. Parents make positive comments about the group, they recognise the friendly, family feel to pre-school and praise staff for meeting their children's individual needs. Parents complete a simple 'All about me' booklet when their children start at the pre-school which provides some information on their children's starting points.

A comprehensive parents brochure contains clear information about the running of the pre-school and the Foundation Stage. Parents are informed they can see their children's assessments records, which are usually passed onto the school when their children leave, but they do not have an opportunity to contribute to them or share in their children's learning. The required information and consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes and to provide consistency of care.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children's needs are not met. The provision has failed to meet their responsibilities under the National Standards by failing to have at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate and by not keeping medication records as required by regulations.

Satisfactory recruitment and vetting procedure are followed to ensure children are protected and cared for by suitable staff. Induction procedures ensure that new staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities within the pre-school. Appropriate operational policies and procedures are in place, which have recently been reviewed and updated to ensure they reflect current requirements. Good adult: child ratios and appropriate staff deployment supports children's care, learning and play.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory.

Senior staff have worked at pre-school for long time, they have built a strong team who work well together. Good relationships are fostered with the school nursery to help ease children's transition into the school environment. Effective action has not been taken to fully address areas for improvement in the provision of nursery education identified at the last inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection to improve the standards of care, the pre-school was required to: increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs; increase the range of books and resources reflecting positive images of diversity, and increase the detail in the lost child policy.

The pre-school appointed a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), who attended relevant training to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but she left last year. Another member of staff has now been identified as SENCo and is to attend appropriate training. The pre-school have purchased a good range of multi-cultural dressing-up clothes and books reflecting cultural diversity, although they do not have resources reflecting positive images of disability. The management have reviewed all policies and procedures, including the lost child policy, to ensure they meet requirements and support the running of the pre-school.

To improve the quality of nursery education the pre-school was required to: develop a system of assessment to plan for children's next steps in learning; identify learning intentions on short term plans, and develop a system to ensure parents are regularly informed of and involved in their children's learning. Assessment records are now in place for each child, although these are not evaluated to plan for children's next steps in learning. Parents are informed they can see their child's assessment records at any time, however no effective system has been introduced to involve them in their children's learning. Focused plans show learning intentions, although these are sometimes very broad, and weekly resource plans show some basic learning intentions. Staff are continuing to receive support from their Early Years Support Teacher and planning and children's assessment records remain as areas for improvement.

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- make sure enough staff are trained in first aid to ensure that at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate is on the premises or on outings at any one time
- ensure written records are kept of all medicines administered to children, and parents sign the record book to acknowledge the entry
- ensure that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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 the organisation of snack time to give children further opportunity to develop their independence and promote their understanding of good health and hygiene practices
- develop children's assessment records to identify their next steps in learning and use to inform future planning
- improve planning to create a balance across the aspects within each area of learning and develop short term planning to include adaptation and grouping of children to take account of their individual stages of development.

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