

Uplands Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251701
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Inspector	Julie Denise Edmonds
Setting Address	Uplands Community Centre, Ashburnham Way, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 8LJ
Telephone number	01502 513329
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Registered person	Uplands 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?

Uplands Pre-School is a community group, run by a voluntary committee. It operates from one large and two smaller interconnected rooms in a community centre in Carlton Colville, Lowestoft. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 40 children aged from two to under five years may attend at any one time. The group opens five days a week during term times. Morning sessions are daily from 09:15 until 11:45, and afternoon sessions are on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 12:45 until 15:15.

There are currently 74 children from two to four years on roll. This includes 60 children who receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school serves the local area. It supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs two part-time and three full-time staff to work with the children. Over half the staff have Early Years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well promoted with staff following effective daily practice to support this. They provide children with individual wipe clean place mats at snack time. The children learn about simple hygiene routines. They wash their hands in fresh water provided in the play room after messy play. Children use wipes prior to snack time and wash their hands after using the toilet, using the cloakroom facilities.

Children are able to help themselves to drinking water when they recognise that they are thirsty, both indoors and out. This supports them to carry out self-care tasks independently. Snack time is well-organised to create a relaxed and social occasion. A staff member sits at each table with a small group of children and promotes conversation. Healthy eating is encouraged. Children are able to see what is offered from the daily menu, choosing from serving bowls. A variety of fresh and dried fruit and vegetables provided includes raisins, strawberries, apple, banana, orange and cucumber. Each day an additional 'taste tester' food is offered to encourage the children to try different flavours. Staff talk to the children about the taste tester food, asking if it is sweet or sour.

Children take part in regular physical activities both indoors and out, supporting them to develop a positive attitude to exercise. They enthusiastically join in with group action rhymes and parachute games. They learn to pedal trikes and use scooters, skilfully negotiating paths, adjusting their speed and avoiding obstacles. Increasing control is gained as they kick balls and throw them at the basketball net. The children balance as they walk along a row of tyres and jump on the nursery trampoline. They enjoy using apparatus as they climb, crawl and slide. Children are able to rest and relax according to their individual needs.

Individual health and dietary needs are met because the provision gains relevant information prior to children attending, and takes heed of this.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in attractive premises. Most sessions take place in the bright hall with much natural light from the large windows. Children benefit from effective use of indoor and outdoor space, moving around freely in both areas. Good use of space indoors allows the children easy access to table top activities and toys are set out attractively on the floor in different areas. The layout is clearly defined with use of partitions displaying colourful posters and children's craft work. They choose from the books displayed in the book corner, using the comfortable seating provided to rest and relax. They select from the dressing up clothes display. Additional equipment is being purchased. This includes accessible storage to give the children further choices in the play rooms in future. They play with a pleasing range of activities outdoors, using the grass and tarmac surfaces.

Children's safety is well promoted through use of risk assessment, with hazards reduced. Suitable measures include maintaining security to prevent children from leaving the premises unsupervised and intruders from entering. Children are well supervised, including outdoors and when using toilet facilities accessed via a corridor. Any broken equipment is removed from use and repaired or disposed of. Children are supported to learn about keeping themselves safe, including about

road safety. For example, during visits from the police and local 'lollipop person'. Emergency escape plan practice raises children's awareness and supports their safe evacuation.

Children are well protected because the staff understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children and are able to put them into practice. They are supervised by vigilant adults who have access to up-to-date safeguarding children guidance. The group has systems in place to only release children into the care of other adults with parents' permission.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children and adults receive a warm welcome as they arrive at the group. Children settle well. Any needing support receive appropriate attention from staff to quickly settle them. For example, lap time and reassuring words. The children display growing independence as they carry out individual tasks and develop social skills as they play together. The relaxed and friendly atmosphere supports their confidence and self-esteem.

The variety of activities, play experiences and opportunities to learn through play allow children to make choices and decisions. They choose freely from the activities set out, both indoors and out. The children listen to music with headphones and play instruments to accompany. They take turns as they play a hedgehog board game and look at books with a staff member in the book corner. Pretend play includes with small world vehicles and figures, making train tracks and dressing up in a variety of costumes. They play with play dough and free paint at an easel. Outdoors they play on a range of physical play equipment, pretend play with tools such as hammers and screwdrivers and at a table with a tea set and play food. They build towers with large construction blocks. The children are fully occupied, enthusiastic and talk and listen while involved.

The children are given time to develop their play, with support provided at appropriate times. Staff become involved in their play. For example, in the role of doctor during pretend play and 'driving' the ambulance. The setting provides activities that meet the needs of the younger children attending in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Nursery Education

Children show a sense of belonging to the nursery and other groups. They talk about their family and events, such as planned holidays. Children have a positive attitude to learning. They adapt their behaviour very well in response to the routine, sitting together at circle time. They enjoy listening to stories read by staff. Children are learning to recognise their names and the individual letters that make up their own name. They enthusiastically use the many opportunities provided to make marks, including in trays of shaving foam. Some children are able to write their own name. For example, with coloured chalk outdoors on the tarmac. A small group focus activity with different size bottles supports children's learning about capacity. They talk about the size of the bottles used and that they need more water to fill the large bottle. Also about floating and sinking as they add objects. They learn to count to 10 and beyond. For example, a child accurately counts 14 items. Children complete simple computer programs. They learn about living things and growing. They plant cress seeds in pots and plants in the outdoor play area, learning about what makes things grow. They learn about mini-beasts, using magnifying glasses. The children develop and practise their large and small physical skills. They use scissors, glue spreaders and paint brushes. They roll out, squeeze and poke play dough, using rolling pins and cutters. The children develop their designing and making skills as they produce models

from different size boxes and containers. They enjoy joining in with rhyming and action songs at circle time. They use their imagination in role play in the home corner and explore a variety of construction materials, such as wooden blocks with nuts and bolts.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress, with staff using their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to promote progression in all areas of the curriculum. Children's interest and play is well supported, with adults consistently interested in what they say and do and working physically at the children's level. Spontaneous opportunities to support children's play and learning are recognised and acted upon by staff. For example, when a group of children are looking out of the window at a workman using a ladder, a staff member joins them. She talks to them about what is happening, about how brave he is because it is very high up and about the long ladder. Information about children's starting points is gained from parents prior to attendance through completion of an 'all about me' booklet. Effective observation, planning and assessment systems are in use. Focus activities increase the range of interesting learning opportunities offered. However, planning detail does not include language to be introduced or how the experience can be adapted and offer additional challenge for the more able children attending. Achievements are assessed in children's individual developmental records. Staff have knowledge of the children's next steps to help individuals progress, with observations recorded and a key worker system in use. However, there is no formal system for recording next steps to ensure this information is used to inform planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from positive behaviour management. They are regarded with respect and spoken to in a positive manner at all times. They receive praise, encouragement and attention when they are taking part in activities. This includes recognition for personal achievements, with a certificate presented and a photograph taken to mark the occasion. They are learning to share. Children respond well to the consistently calm and polite role models presented by staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children approach play and learning with curiosity. They are learning to help others in wider society, raising funds for 'Children in Need'. Good relationships are formed with staff and other children.

Children from all backgrounds and of all abilities are welcomed, contributing to the group's commitment to inclusion. Staff get to know the individual children in their care very well. Modern resources are in use, with attractive posters on display. These reflect images of different age, culture, gender and disability, supporting the children to develop positive attitudes to others and become aware of diversity. They learn about their own and the culture of others through celebrations and festivals such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, Christmas and Easter. Children are developing links with their own community. They learn about the beach and sea with items brought into the setting by staff and visitors, such as seaweed and fishing nets.

The nursery works in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure children's additional needs are met. Commendable practice promotes inclusion of children. Staff develop their skills in line with the needs of individuals. They attend specific training to ensure they are able to promote the welfare and development of all children in their care.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with written information about the Foundation Stage and current topics in the prospectus and through displays and newsletters. They are encouraged to bring resources in from home and to help at sessions on a rota basis, promoting involvement in their child's learning. Some parents have limited awareness

of the developmental records kept about their child. They do not generally see the record and do not contribute to help inform future planning and aid their child's progress. Parents are complimentary about the setting and the progress their children are making.

Children benefit from a gradual settling-in process supported by a key worker and the trusting relationships built between staff and parents. Two-way communication is encouraged verbally enabling staff to provide care that is well matched to children's individual needs. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns or complaints they may have, promoting early resolution and continuity of care for the children. Questionnaires encourage them to comment on the care provided, confirming if they know how to make a complaint. Contact details of Ofsted are displayed, supporting exchange of information with the regulator.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children and adults are welcomed into the setting by experienced and mostly qualified staff. A range of information gives parents an overall picture of how the setting operates on a daily basis. Children benefit from well-organised and smooth running sessions. This is achieved through efficient staff team work, with preparation time before each session used well and individual staff taking responsibility for specific tasks. The staff work closely together to ensure consistency of practice to meet children's needs and promote the nursery's aims. The children receive appropriate adult time and attention at arrival and throughout sessions. The nursery is celebrating completion of the work towards gaining accreditation with Suffolk Quality Assurance Scheme and are awaiting confirmation of success.

Children are not left alone with adults who have not completed appropriate checks. All the required documentation is in place. Policies and procedures are mostly well maintained for the efficient and safe management of the provision.

Leadership and management are good. The staff and student induction process is comprehensive and job descriptions ensure staff are aware of their individual responsibilities. Team building is supported, with staff communicating well informally. Success of the provision is well monitored. For example, evaluation takes place to ensure all areas of learning are covered and the effectiveness of focused activities. Staff are enthusiastic, motivated and encouraged to attend training workshops to keep up-to-date with current practice. Staff performance and development are monitored to promote children's welfare, care and learning.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group agreed to develop a procedure to log times of arrival or collection if children arrive late or are collected early or late. Registration systems now show attendance accurately supporting the efficient and safe management of the provision. They have also developed formal procedures for regular risk assessments, improving safety. The group now have an enclosed outdoor area, improving opportunities for children to access outdoors and develop their knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. Children are learning to link sounds and letters and read and write their own names, supporting development of their literacy skills. Assessment opportunities are identified in planning to ensure useful information is gathered about individual children's progress.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 policies and procedures are well maintained at all times

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 a formal system for recording children's next steps to inform planning and provide detail in focus activity plans to include language to be introduced and how the experience can be adapted for individual children
- raise the profile of assessment records with parents, encouraging them to see them periodically and contribute.

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