

Opportunity Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	259068
Inspection date	06 June 2007
Inspector	Juliette Jennings
Setting Address	Kempsfield, Primrose Drive, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY3 7TP
Telephone number	01743 247600
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Registered person	Opportunity Group
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Opportunity Pre-School is situated in the Reabrook area of Shrewsbury in Shropshire. The group serves the Shrewsbury area.

There are currently 48 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. This includes 33 funded three- and four-year-olds. The pre-school supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday during term-time only. Session times are from 09:00 until 11:30 and from 12:15 until 14:45. There is a lunch club facility between 11:30 and 12:15 for children wishing to stay all day. Children can attend either morning or afternoon sessions or full days.

There are six members of staff working with the children, five of whom hold suitable early years qualifications. Staff access regular training on early years issues and receive support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit greatly from the access to fresh air and the outdoor environment within the routine of the day. In particular, growing vegetables in the garden gives children the opportunity to learn about how things grow whilst spending good amounts of time in the outdoor area. In addition, they have sound opportunities to climb, balance, move over and under, through and in-between, for example, using wheeled toys and experiencing the complex climbing equipment. The pre-school is currently looking at how they can provide the outdoor space much more frequently for children and are considering the use of shaded areas to support this during the warmer or more inclement weather. More detailed physical skills are supported because children use resources such as magnetic fish and rods in water play, buckets and spades for wet sand, foam, pencils and using their hands as paintbrushes to paint pictures.

Staff follow good procedures which allow children to enjoy a clean and hygienic environment and to learn about keeping themselves clean and germ free. For example, children talk with staff about washing hands, and opportunities for this are available throughout the routine. Documentation is in order to record children's accidents or administration of medication, and staff are trained in first aid so would know what to do in an emergency situation in order to meet children's needs, specifically in relation to life saving action.

Children develop a good understanding of healthy eating. They choose from a healthy range of snacks such as fruit and vegetables, and fresh drinking water is available throughout the session which children can access independently. Children learn about growing food and have opportunities to eat the food that they have grown. They enjoy healthy packed lunches which are provided by parents and they are supported to eat within a sociable atmosphere, discussing recent events and other matters that are important to them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and benefit from a colourful, stimulating, child-orientated and accessible space, with the areas they use bright, colourful and interesting. Children are obviously confident, happy and secure in the space. They have very good access to a wide variety of toys, resources, equipment and natural materials which they access from mostly low-level storage and within a routine which accommodates a good mixture of free play, child-choice and some adult-focused activities. The use of an outdoor learning environment within the daily routine promotes children's learning by utilising a variety of materials, resources and experiences here to reinforce their learning.

There are sound systems in place for ensuring that children are safe on the premises, for example, a secure entry system, a visitor record and very good supervision of children at all times. In particular, the lost child procedure has been carefully thought out and details areas for searches and maps of the local area to assist staff in this event. Thorough risk assessments are in place, for both the setting and for outings. Daily safety checks are carried out by competent staff, which generally work in practice, however, there was one safety issue highlighted at inspection in relation to some hazardous substances at low level in the staff toilet. This was potentially a risk to children as the toilet was not inaccessible, although staff acted quickly to remove the items once the issue was highlighted.

Policies, procedures and other information is in place to help to ensure that children's welfare is promoted effectively. These are reviewed regularly and training is accessed so that staff are aware of what to do if there is a concern about any of the children. There is a thorough child protection procedure available to all staff which contains information in relation to safeguarding children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are comfortable in the setting because parents regularly share information about children's needs, interests and experiences outside the home. They are enthusiastic and self-assured in this welcoming environment. Those who are new to the pre-school are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive towards their individual needs, for example, being encouraged to quietly observe with a favourite activity of trains, whilst the rest of the group settle down to circle time.

Staff continually evaluate the activities they provide to ensure that children are offered suitable challenge in relation to their individual stages of development and to promote their well-being. Children achieve very well because staff are highly skilled and use their exceptional understanding of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, to provide children with high quality and outstanding opportunities to enjoy and achieve.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding

Children are making outstanding progress towards the early learning goals. They relish their time in the setting and have an excellent attitude to learning. They are happy, settled and purposefully engaged throughout the session. Children develop confidence and a strong sense of self through positive interaction with interested and caring adults. Three- and four-year-olds thoroughly enjoy exploring a wide range of activities which contribute to their creativity, such as dancing, listening and moving to music, playing instruments, painting, exploring foam and growing vegetables.

Children are very well supported by the experienced and enthusiastic staff who are skilled at encouraging them to extend their experiences and reinforce their learning and at listening and talking to them. They develop their understanding of information technology, number and letter recognition whilst using the computer with increasing skill. They explore foam for lengthy periods of time, enjoying the feel of it as it spreads up their arms and even onto their faces. The look of enjoyment on the faces of children as they enjoy this activity is fantastic and staff clearly enjoy this special time with them, interacting in a similar way as they explore the foam too.

Three- and four-year-olds notice how the potatoes have grown as they dig them up, sort them into a bucket, clean them and cook them to eat. This activity reinforces for children where the food they eat comes from and they thoroughly enjoy planting seeds, potatoes and plants, and watching them as they grow, taking care to water them when needed. Children spend time in the role play area, developing complicated stories about hospitals, dealing with allergic reactions, nursing others back to good health, taking each others temperature or giving medicine.

Children make excellent progress because staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. They work closely and effectively to monitor children's progress and ensure that they move through the stepping stones at an appropriate pace, making sure that assessments relate back into planning so that their interests are fully supported. The excellent mix of child-initiated play, with some well-planned, adult-focused activities, supports children to be actively involved in their learning and allows them to explore and investigate with keenness and excitement.

Children's early communication skills are extremely well supported through high quality adult-child interactions. Children who speak English as an additional language are fully encouraged to develop their skills through exploration of sensory activities such as foam play, use of Makaton sign language and reinforcement of letter sounds in everyday activities. Children's early writing skills are supported very well as they play imaginatively. They enjoy writing lists, making notes whilst dressed up as police officers and forming letter shapes in foam play. More able children spell out familiar and unfamiliar words with guidance from staff, thus progressing their understanding of letter and word recognition.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children work harmoniously with others, respect others and are learning about their beliefs, cultures and traditions. Equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice is actively promoted for all children. Positive images and support of a diverse world are intrinsically included in all aspects of the provision, in displays and posters, in resources and activities, in the whole ethos of the group, in the partnership with parents and in the strong community feel that the group has. The pre-school works effectively with other settings, schools and community projects such as the local arts centre to fully promote children's understanding and involvement in their local community. This helps children to develop a sense of belonging in their world and helps them to know about the wider world. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children from a variety of backgrounds and those with learning difficulties, disabilities and other specific needs are warmly welcomed and their needs accommodated. Very good relationships are encouraged and children are superbly supported in a professional and sensitive way. Children develop a very strong sense of self-worth because staff are extremely sensitive to the uniqueness of each child and work very closely with parents and other professionals to enable children to develop at their own individual pace. Staff are very experienced in supporting specific needs and work tirelessly to promote a truly inclusive environment where all children are valued, their personalities respected and their sense of belonging reinforced. Very thorough methods for obtaining information regarding children's individual needs are in place. Settling in procedures work very well, with children allowed to settle at their own pace, exploring the activities and beginning to join in with the group with the sensitive support of staff.

Children behave well, take turns and respond positively to the simple routine and clear boundaries. This helps children develop a positive attitude and show concern for others. Excellent use of praise and encouragement helps build children's self-esteem. The happy, relaxed feel to the group supports good behaviour effectively.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children benefit very well from a positive partnership with parents through practitioners continuing to share important information about children's ongoing needs and interests and from a two-way sharing of information between parents and practitioners to enhance their learning and development. This promotes children's

progress in the nursery extremely well and helps them to fully contribute to the provision. Parent's views about their children's learning are sought and acted on and they are actively encouraged to become involved in their children's learning in meaningful ways.

Practitioners work very well in partnership with parents to meet the needs of children. Extremely positive comments have been received from parents, which include aspects in relation to the supportiveness of staff, their understanding of children's individual needs, their ability to support each child whatever their individual needs and their relaxed and enthusiastic approach to children. This aspect is very strong and is a credit to the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The relationship between the staff team and committee is very strong and all have a very clear overview of the setting as a whole. Regular access to training and ongoing review of policies and procedures supports the strong staff team and enables them to ensure that the provision for nursery education is excellent for children. Access to training has been particularly effective in supporting children's individual needs and they are all very much aware of the individuality of each and every child attending the setting. Staff work extremely well together as a team, with everyone aware of their roles and responsibilities within the group and contributing to assessment systems and planning to fully support children's learning. The setting are currently looking at how they can further develop the outdoor area as a much more free-flow facility within the daily routine.

Detailed and extensive documentation is in very good order and in line with requirements. The operational plan is organised effectively so that it shows how the setting operates on a daily basis. Paperwork is stored securely on site, ensuring children's information remains confidential. Children are cared for very much in line with parents' wishes, with appropriate consents and very detailed information obtained from them prior to the children starting at the setting. Staff continue to work very closely with parents to monitor changes to information so that children's needs can be accommodated at all times. Extensive policies and procedures are in place and are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they continue to work in practice. The organisation of the space accommodates children's needs very well and allows them to develop and learn in a child-orientated, exciting and stimulating environment. The pre-school is proactive in providing an inclusive environment which effectively supports the uniqueness and individuality of each and every child and their families. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the setting was asked to improve the lost child procedure. This has been addressed and it is now a comprehensive procedure, with detailed maps and information about search areas and timings so that staff can be clear about what to do in this event. In addition, the setting was asked to ensure that the key worker system was effective and met the needs of the children attending. This has been further developed so that all children have a key person.

At the previous education inspection the setting were asked to improve the opportunities for children to become more independent, particularly in creative activities and at snack time. Children have good opportunities to pour their own drinks and creative work is now largely child-initiated.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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):

- make sure that daily risk assessments are rigorous.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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