

Spinney Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	502232
Inspection date	06 July 2007
Inspector	Sarah Elizabeth Howell
Setting Address	Spinney Avenue, Ditton, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 8LD
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Registered person	Spinney 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Spinney Pre-School opened in 2001. It is a committee run pre-school with self contained premises in the grounds of Ditton Church of England Primary School with which it has close links. It is situated on the border of Ditton in Widnes. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 08.45 until 11.15 and 12.30 until 15.00 term time only. All children share access to the secure outdoor play area. There are currently 20 children from two to under five years on roll. Children come from the local area. The pre-school employs three staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting has close links with the local Early Years department.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is effectively promoted within the pre-school. Staff employ a wide range of health and safety practices and procedures which ensure that children's health is safeguarded

and promoted. They work closely with parents to minimise the risk of cross infection and have clear guidelines about when children can attend following periods of illness. Children have a good understanding of why it is important for them to have good personal hygiene habits. They explain that washing their hands stop germs from making their tummies poorly, and that if they drop their cutlery on the floor they need to get a new one as the other one would be dirty. Staff explain to children why they follow certain procedures, for example, covering snacks with protective film until snack time so that children are learning why good hygiene procedures are important in keeping them fit and well.

Children have a very good understanding of foods that are good for them and support their healthy development as they prepare, eat and talk about healthy foods daily. Drinking water is readily accessible to them at all times during each session and staff promote drinking water particularly after children have been active. The setting has achieved a healthy eating award from the local authority as it does not provide snacks and drinks which contain sugar. As a result, young children are learning from a very early age about positive lifestyle habits which actively support them in being healthy as they grow up.

Staff also promote children's secure emotional development through the provision of a warm and welcoming environment; the use of positive key worker relationships between staff, children and parents; and through activities which enable children to explore their feelings in a safe and supportive way. As a result, children settle quickly into the daily life of the setting and have very good relationships with the staff. Children's physical well-being and development is very effectively promoted within the setting. Children love being active and staff plan and participate alongside them in a wide range of fun fitness and relaxation activities. Children have excellent access to outside play and to a wide range of resources which enable them to make good progress in the development of their physical skills and abilities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The staff provide a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment for young children. Parents and children are greeted individually as they arrive for each session. They are welcomed into an environment where lots of information is displayed which gives parents both practical information about the setting and lots of visual references to the types of activities children do in their sessions. Resources are wide ranging, interesting and very effectively organised to promote children's independent learning and enjoyment. Children make very good use of toys and equipment, selecting what they want and using it to develop their ideas and extend their play and learning. For example, children love to play in the role play area and help themselves to other resources from around the setting to use as props and develop their play further. They also make very good use of technological resources which are easily available to them around the room, for example, a computer, digital camera and cassette player and headphones.

Arrangements to keep children safe are very good. Staff share responsibility for children's safety, effectively promoting children's independence whilst providing good supervision and lots of opportunities for them to learn and take age appropriate risks safely. Risk assessments and procedures such as reviewing the settings accident book all ensure that the setting is well maintained. Staff regularly monitor children's changing safety needs both indoors and outside in the grounds and when on outings. Fire safety arrangements are excellent. Children practise emergency evacuation once every half term to ensure they have a good understanding of how to respond should such an event occur.

Children are developing a sound understanding of what staying safe involves for them. Through planned activities, play, discussion with staff, interesting talks from people such as fire and road safety officers, children are developing their knowledge and understanding of what staying safe is about. They know why it is important to protect themselves from the sun when it is hot outside and why they need to leave the building quickly and quietly in the event of an emergency. They recognise that they can also keep themselves and each other safe through the way in which they behave. As a result, children and staff have worked together to agree some rules for the setting which children know keep them safe and happy. Staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues and procedures. They regularly discuss changes to the procedures and local authority guidelines at their team meetings to ensure that everyone is familiar with current guidance. A written statement provides both staff and parents with information about the setting's approach.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children arrive at pre-school excited and eager to play. Parents comment that their children miss attending the provision in the holidays and look forward to the start of each term. Staff make excellent use of well planned and regularly reviewed continuous provision. They listen effectively to what children say and closely observe what they do. As a result, they are able to respond spontaneously to children's interests and plan and provide activities that stimulate them and which relate more closely to their experiences and everyday lives. For example, children are exploring the idea of marriage and weddings, as this is topical in their local community at this time. Staff encourage children to think about how they might explore this topic and to share their ideas and thoughts. As a result, children are captivated, extremely motivated and participate with enthusiasm in all the activities that follow. This provides very effective support for children's learning.

Staff are very skilled at encouraging children to feel good about themselves and to have confidence in their skills and abilities. They promote self confidence through actively involving young children in the daily routines and tasks of each session and by encouraging them to do things for themselves. For example, children enjoy and happily take part in activities, such as preparing snacks and clearing away resources at the end of each session. Children's cooperative behaviour and their enthusiasm to participate in a wide variety of activities very effectively promotes their development and learning and helps them to make excellent progress with their social skills.

Staff value children's individuality and recognise that children learn in different ways and at different speeds from one another. They adapt their teaching styles and approaches to meet the needs of individual and groups of children and this is reflected in their planning and evaluation of children's learning. Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities for younger children. They provide useful information for parents about what children do and how this supports their learning through the use of photographs linked to the components of the framework. Children have very good relationships with each other, they play cooperatively and have excellent relationships with staff. They request support as and when they need it but generally operating very independently within the setting and directing a large part of their own learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff combine extensive knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage with a variety of excellent teaching methods to enable children to make very good progress in their learning. Planning for children's learning relates closely to staff's understanding of how children learn. Staff know that children learn more effectively if they are involved in activities and projects that interest them and capture their imagination. Therefore planning for learning is reviewed on a weekly basis to ensure that it is both consistent with what children need to move forward and relevant to their current interests. All staff are involved in planning and they use their day to day observations of children to inform the planning for the next steps in each child's learning.

All six areas of learning are extremely well promoted within the setting and children are making very good progress throughout. For example, children's physical development is extremely well promoted and as a result, many of the four-year-olds are operating within the early goals. They move with control and confidence and show a good awareness of space, of themselves and of the needs of others around them. They are consolidating a wide range of fine motor and manipulative skills, recognise the importance of keeping healthy and understand some of the things that support them with this, such as diet and personal hygiene routines.

Similarly children's personal, social and emotional development is very effectively fostered. Parents comment favourably on the progress children make in becoming more self confident and how this supports and enhances their interaction with their peers and with adults. Children listen to one another and to adults and have confidence to contribute to small and large group discussions. Children also have excellent self care skills and select and use activities and resources independently helping to prepare them for the expectations of school and to equip them with the skills they need to direct their own learning. Children work as part of a group, taking turns and sharing fairly, and understand that the rules they have agreed together help everyone to enjoy the time they spend in pre-school.

Staff very effectively use the daily routine to extend children's learning, for example, whilst preparing their mid morning snack staff and children talk about shape, colour, food hygiene and healthy eating. Children learn about numbers and their usefulness through their everyday activities and routines as well as through planned maths activities. For example, children regularly use numbers and concepts, such as more than and less in their everyday play, comparing how many snacks they have made to the number of children present and working out how many children are left as parents collect and another child leaves. As a result, children are already practising using simple mathematical ideas to help them solve practical problems.

Staff also recognise that some children learn more effectively when actively involved in larger more physical activity, often outdoors. As a result, they make extremely good use of the outdoors to provide opportunities for children to continue developing their knowledge across all six areas of learning. The resources to enable children to explore, investigate and enjoy the outdoor area are excellent. Recent photographic evidence shows children investigating the outdoors to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. For example, children enjoy planting seeds, observing how they change and then using what they have grown to make their own snacks.

Children are also becoming very skilled in their use of language and their ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas. Children initiate conversation, take notice of what others say and use talk to resolve disagreements in their everyday play. Staff encourage children to extend their vocabulary and model new language as the opportunity arises, for example, children talking about how to turn water into ice were encouraged to think about 'liquids' and 'solids', and

remembered these labels when explaining their experiment later. In addition, staff are very successfully promoting children's writing skills within the setting. Mark making resources are varied and plentiful and children are encouraged to use them wherever they want to. Children use basic writing skills throughout their play activities, for example, making pretend lists in the role play area, putting their own names on their creative work, and recording their experiments with magnets by using symbols and asking staff to write the real names of things underneath. As a result, many four-year-olds are able to hold pencils correctly and form recognisable letters.

Staff are skilled at observing and monitoring children's progress. Extremely good use is made of the key worker system to ensure that observations of children's achievements have been consolidated over time. Observations are used to keep parents well informed about children's progress and to suggest activities that they can do at home to support their child's learning. Developmental profiles are well maintained and use photographs to help make clear links between children's activities and the stepping stones and early learning goals. Parents speak highly of staff's commitment to helping children achieve and comments include how the pre-school inspires children to do more.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff value and respect children and their families and work closely with parents in order to be well informed about the circumstances that influence a child's ability to enjoy and achieve within the setting. Staff are skilled at observing and recording their observations about children and they use this information very successfully to plan for both group and individual needs. In addition, there is excellent recognition of the individual ways in which different children learn and a proactive approach to adapting teaching methods to promote these differences to the benefit of all children. Although no children with learning difficulties or disabilities currently attend, staff are experienced and skilled in observing and assessing children and work closely with parents and professionals from health and education to promote all children in reaching their potential and overcoming barriers to their learning.

Children are learning to value diversity both in their own community and in the wider world around them. They explore the similarities and differences between families, religions, cultures and traditions in a wide variety of ways. For example, through planned topic work, talking about and exploring issues that children bring with them through their own experiences and through role play and creative projects. Children are encouraged to behave with care and consideration towards each other and to staff and behaviour is closely linked to people's feelings within the setting. For example, when drawing up a list of rules to guide behaviour, children are encouraged to think about what makes them sad and happy and to talk about ways in which they could work together to reduce the things that make each other unhappy. As a result, children pay more attention to the rules and have a greater understanding of why they are useful. Staff promote good social skills development both through their own modelling and by encouraging and praising children for sharing, kindness and turn taking. Children thrive and develop very good self confidence through the encouragement and praise they receive from staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents explain that communication is excellent and they feel very well informed about how the pre-school is run and what their child is learning. Staff offer home visits prior to children starting pre-school to help establish good working relationships between staff and parents and to support children in making secure transitions into the setting. Staff provide both verbal and written feedback about children's progress,

using photographs of children's activities to help parents make links between what children do and how this supports their learning. Staff also provide lots of information about how the setting uses the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' both through written material and visual displays and explanation. Meetings are held to share information with parents about specific issues, for example, new approaches to teaching as well opportunities for them to be involved in reviewing and adding to their children's developmental records. Parents speak highly of the organisation of the pre-school, how much their children enjoy the time they spend in the setting and how well it prepares them for school.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is outstanding. Staff are very enthusiastic and committed to providing the best possible support for children's enjoyment and learning. In order to do this they have a range of procedures in place to enable them to review and evaluate their work and assess its impact on children's learning. Staff meetings, appraisals and peer on peer reviews take place at regular intervals to ensure that staff have the necessary skills and support to move forward in the work they are doing. The commitment to development and training within the setting is excellent. All staff regularly attend relevant early years courses and share what they have learned with their colleagues within the setting. Both the pre-school manager and staff as a whole are enthusiastic about experimenting with new approaches to teaching and they work closely alongside school staff to implement ideas that extend and enhance children's experience of early education and care. Although the manager takes the lead role in implementing the Foundation Stage curriculum, all staff are experienced and skilled in helping children make very good progress through the stepping stones and early learning goals and all staff contribute to the planning.

In addition, managers and staff regularly review the use of their environment to assess its impact on children's enjoyment and learning. For example, looking at how effectively the lay out of activities and the accessibility of resources and equipment is in supporting children's play and learning, and in particular, their physical development through the opportunities it presents for stretching, bending and moving around safely. As a result, although the space within the setting is limited, the organisation of the learning environment is excellent and very effectively supports children in exploring and developing their own interests and beginning to direct their own learning. Staff explain that this is an ongoing process and that the way in which the room is used is continually under review to ensure it meets the changing needs of the children who attend. The setting maintains very good links with other agencies such as Early Years consultants, health care professionals and members of the local community who visit to share their skills and knowledge with both staff and children.

A wide range of well-maintained records, policies and procedures are available in the setting. All staff, students and parents have their own copies of the setting's policies and procedures and additional copies are available in the reception area for visitors. Policies and procedures are formally reviewed once a year, but staff also use staff meetings to review and amend policy documents to ensure that they are consistent with legislation and with the day to day requirements of the setting. At present, the settings child protection statement does not contain information about the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect being made against a member of staff. The manager liaises closely with Ofsted in relation to the settings registration, for example, informing the regulator when the setting was

no longer operating before and after school care. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were made about improving children's records. The attendance record consistently reflects both staff and children's hours of attendance and medication records are well maintained and signed by both staff and parents. In addition a recommendation was made in relation to first aid training for staff. All staff in the setting currently have a paediatric first aid qualification and these certificates are displayed within the setting for parents information. As a result, records more effectively help staff to keep children safe and well.

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

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 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):

- review the safeguarding statement to ensure that it is consistent with the requirements in the National Standards.

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