

Sutton St James Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253629
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Inspector	Anna Davies
Setting Address	The Unit, Sutton St James CP School, Bells Drove, Sutton St James, Lincolnshire, PE12 0JG
Telephone number	01945 440000
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Registered person	Sutton St James pre-School Playgroup Committee
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

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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?

Sutton St. James Pre-School Playgroup is a committee run provision which first opened in 1970. It operates from a mobile classroom within the grounds of the village primary school. The premises consist of an entrance hall, main playroom, kitchen, toilet facilities for staff and children, and storage areas. There is an enclosed outdoor play area attached to the building. Children from the village of Sutton St. James and surrounding rural areas attend the group.

The pre-school operates each weekday during school term time from 09.00 until 11.45. A maximum of 18 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 23 children on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for early education. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting does not currently support children who speak English as an additional language.

The provision employs four members of staff on both a full and part-time basis. Of these, the manager holds a Level 3 qualification and is currently working towards a Level 4 qualification. One other member of staff holds a Level 2 qualification and one is currently working towards a Level 2 qualification. There is a bank of relief staff which includes members of the committee.

The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from a teacher advisor at the Lincolnshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an environment where procedures are generally effective in reducing the risk of cross-infection. Staff spray the tables with antibacterial spray before children sit to eat their snack and children wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. However, these practices are not always effective in preventing the risk of cross-contamination. For example, after children have washed their hands for snack time they re-join the group to sing action songs such as 'heads, shoulders, knees and toes' where they touch their heads and outdoor shoes, before eating their snack. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of hygiene practices as they prompt each other to follow the sequencing pictures that show them the process of hand washing. However, children use bars of soap which are sometimes covered in paint from art activities. This does not ensure that good hygiene practices are consistently promoted. Children's health is promoted effectively as there are written guidelines that cover communicable diseases and exclusion periods. Children are well cared for in the event of an accident. Sufficient staff hold first aid qualifications to enable them to deal with accidents effectively. Appropriate documentation is kept and shared with parents to safeguard children, including the reporting of accidents and administration of medicines.

Children benefit from a varied and healthy snack menu. They choose from a variety of options as they register their choice on a snack board each morning when they arrive. Choice of snack includes fresh fruit, toast, carrot and cucumber pieces, raisins and biscuits. Children receive a good sized portion of snack which is individually prepared by staff. The majority of children choose healthy options which promotes their growth and development. Children enjoy sitting together as they eat and this creates a friendly, sociable and relaxed atmosphere. Children choose from a selection of drinks to accompany their snack. However, the system for enabling children to freely access drinks throughout the session does not completely prevent the risk of cross-infection. For example, children place used cups back on to the top of the drinks trolley, next to the clean cups, which other children may subsequently pick up and use.

Children benefit from many opportunities to develop their physical skills and have plenty of fresh air. For example, children are able to choose when they play outside in the pre-school garden, as the door to the outside play area and garden is open throughout the main sessions. In the garden, children develop their physical skills on tricycles, competently negotiating space as they avoid other people and nearby towers of bricks created by their friends. Inside, staff incorporate action songs into their daily routines. For example, children enjoy songs such as the 'Grand Old Duke of York', confidently marching and swinging their arms in time to the music. This develops their coordination skills. Staff use further opportunities to promote children's physical development. For example, a sponsored bicycle ride enables children to practise their balance and coordination skills as they rapidly pedal their bicycles around the adjacent school playground, confidently controlling their speed so that they stay in a line, one behind the other.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well-maintained and child-focused environment. Bright display boards feature children's own work, which shows them that their work is valued, makes the environment attractive and helps children to develop a sense of belonging. Staff prepare the room with a wide range of appropriate resources before children arrive each day to create a stimulating environment for them. Further resources are stored on low-level units and shelving which enables children to make choices in their play and to be easily involved in clearing away; this helps them to learn to keep their play environment free from hazards and to learn to respect property. Children are encouraged to keep themselves safe because staff remind children of safety issues, for example, 'please don't stand on the chair'. However, there are some missed opportunities to extend children's learning and understanding about the possible consequences of their safety if they do not use equipment safely. Children move confidently around the play space, both indoors and outside. Space is organised to allow children opportunities to be busy such as with arts and crafts activities, physical play, or relax and share books in the comfortable book area. Staff make good use of the garden, which has a large area of safety surface to enable children to climb on apparatus or ride their bicycles in safety. Extra resources are taken outside so that it extends the learning environment for the children.

Children are kept safe through good supervision and good systems ensure that children only leave the premises with an appropriate adult. Children benefit from using a good range of suitable and developmentally appropriate toys and equipment. Comprehensive risk assessments and a continuous monitoring programme of ensuring that resources are clean and safe for use, ensure the continued safety of the inside and outside environments, as well as any outings undertaken by the pre-school. Children's safety in case of fire is promoted. Regular fire drills help children to learn how they could evacuate the premises safely to protect themselves.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff are aware of the child protection policy, have a good understanding of signs and symptoms of abuse and know what actions to take if they have concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are happy to attend; they enjoy their time in the stimulating and well-resourced environment. Children display much confidence and have built secure and warm relationships with each other and the staff who care for them. They are eager to share their ideas, such as initiating a game of hide and seek, organising themselves into 'hidiers' and 'seekers' and delight in finding other children hidden behind the furniture. Staff strive to make the atmosphere fun for the children and provide good role models for them as they join in with action songs and sit with the children at snack time, listening to their thoughts and ideas. This results in a warm, friendly atmosphere which increases the children's sense of belonging and security. Staff provide a good range of activities which are balanced to include child- initiated activities and themed projects such as creating mini fish tanks to support the current 'under the sea' theme. There are currently no children under three years of age that attend the pre-school, but there are sound systems and documentation in place to fully support and promote the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children under three years have access to the same planned activities as the older children and these are effectively adapted to meet their needs by staff who have a good knowledge and understanding of younger children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage, the early learning goals and the stepping stones children take in order to achieve them. They understand how children learn and apply this as they support children with the rich blend of learning opportunities provided. For example, good use is made of songs and action rhymes to maintain children's attention and interest at key times, such as snack times and group times. All staff interact well with the children and know when to let children develop their play on their own and when to offer support. However, some staff miss some opportunities to extend children's learning during daily routines and some spontaneous situations that arise. For example, explaining why you should not stand on a chair instead of instructing 'don't stand on the chair', or further extending children's learning when they comment to children that they have mixed colours of paint together.

Staff are able to assess the children's starting points and build effective plans for the children based on their next steps of learning. Planning clearly shows that all six areas of learning are covered and display learning intentions which are followed through organised, focussed activities, which stimulate children. Staff make regular observations of the children as they play which are effectively used to identify children's next steps of learning. This information is generally used, together with the staff's sound knowledge of the children, to encourage children to make good progress. A system for clearly linking children's identified next steps to the key activities provided, is currently being developed. Staff manage children's behaviour well by acknowledging and supporting their individual needs effectively, encouraging sharing and the use of manners.

Children are motivated to learn through the range of stimulating activities provided. They are forming good relationships with each other as they announce, 'Look, we help each other'. They demonstrate anticipation as they eagerly wait to see if they have been chosen as 'Today's Helper'. Children are learning to be independent as they clear away their used plates and cups after snack time and take themselves to the bathroom to wash their hands and use the toilet. Children's sense of community is promoted as visitors such as farm shop owners, police officers and motor bike enthusiasts visit the pre-school to share their interests and skills. Children take part in the local flower festival and go along to see their own and others' entries. Children confidently talk about their families. For example, they eagerly talk about how their daddy makes chairs and toy trains from wood he has collected in his trailer.

Children are beginning to recognise their own name, as they self-register when they first arrive, using name cards. Some effective labelling on displays of children's work, snack board and sequencing posters generally enables children to begin to identify familiar words in their environment. Children access many mark making implements in a designated writing area and they use note pads and pencils to create appointment sheets, menus and shopping lists as the role play area changes its theme. This gives children many opportunities to develop their emergent writing skills for a variety of purposes. However, there are some missed opportunities to further extend children's learning through regular opportunities to routinely label their own work and recognise a wider range of familiar words, as toys and resources are not labelled. Children are encouraged to link the sounds and letters of their first names and staff effectively support children by asking them, 'Whose name begins with...'. Children use books carefully, independently turning the pages. They show sustained interest in stories and use the book area well for both organised and spontaneous story times.

Counting and number recognition activities are practical and fun for children. Older children are challenged appropriately in their calculation skills, for example, they confidently add six girls and 10 boys, correctly confirming the total of 16 children altogether. Displays of numbers are rich in the inside and outside play areas which further promotes children's number recognition skills. For example, children routinely display the numbers of children present at pre-school and number plates on the garden fence stimulate children's mathematical interest as they play. Children learn about measurement as they measure items with pieces of string and rulers. They begin to understand the concepts of volume and capacity as they discuss how many jugs of water it takes to fill up empty bottles.

Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first-hand experiences in an interesting environment. For example, they explore the pumping action of a water toy and describe what is happening as the water is pumped out. They investigate the workings of the inside of a clock and watch as worms they find in the garden, explore the wormery. Planned activities such as a sponsored car wash, give children opportunities to look at how equipment such as hoses and sponges work. Children have opportunities to create and design as they make models by attaching boxes and other recyclable materials together using tape, glue, paint, material and scissors. They enjoy using technology as they competently use computer programmes such as 'Tizzy's Busy Week', confidently 'clicking' the mouse to control the on-screen character as she 'mows the grass'. Children also use programmable toys, radio controlled cars, and tape recorders which furthers their knowledge of information technology.

Children are able to be creative through role play, music and movement, and readily express and communicate their own ideas. For example, children use the current 'fishing' role play area to develop their game of 'sharks', describing how they are going to jump into the water to catch them. Children use the painting easel to create their own pictures. They are able to describe these paintings to familiar staff. They have opportunities to use their senses to explore materials such as shaving foam, jelly and clay. Children's interest in music is stimulated through everyday and planned activities. For example, a themed day enables the children to use microphones, karaoke machines and a pretend stage to develop their imagination and creative skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual personalities and needs are well known and respected within the pre-school. Staff seek a range of information from parents to enable them to meet the children's individual needs. This also ensures that all children are valued and included in the life of the pre-school. Staff ensure that they treat all children equally. For example, lists of children who have been selected as a special helper ensure that all children get a turn, and all children register their own preference of snack each day. Children's play is supported by a good range of resources such as books, jigsaws, posters and dolls, which are aimed at promoting positive images of people from a wide range of cultures and abilities. For example, there are multilingual welcoming posters. Children celebrate a wide range of festivals throughout the year, such as Chinese New Year, where children create and parade a large Chinese dragon and make fortune purses. This helps children to further understand and appreciate the diverse society in which they live.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are recognised and well supported by experienced and caring staff. Daily records by both parents and staff are kept of children's progress and effective systems for working with outside agencies are in place, which ensures

that children's individual needs are recognised and continue to be met. Children behave very well, care for each other and freely share and take turns. This is in response to a stimulating environment where children are able to choose the direction of their play, and effective staff deployment which ensures that children receive appropriate support, should there be instances of inappropriate behaviour. Children are familiar with the rules of the pre-school and are full of pride when they receive rewards for their efforts, such as certificates when they complete their sponsored bicycle ride. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. All children benefit from the staff's endeavour to create a positive partnership with parents. Parents speak highly of the setting and feel involved in their child's learning and development. Parents are provided with good quality information about the pre-school and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff ask parents to discuss what their child can do after six weeks of attending the setting and a further consultation during the year ensures that parents are kept informed of their children's progress. However, an on-going system for encouraging parents to share what they know about their children is being considered but not currently in place. This does not help staff to have a complete picture of the children for when they routinely plan for their next steps. Parents are informed about current themes through information sheets and notice boards which display the weekly planning. Parents become involved in their children's learning by attending open days throughout the year and going into the setting to share their skills, for example, by reading stories or offering cooking activities. Parents are invited to join the committee. The present committee has a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Overall, this positive partnership ensures that children receive consistent messages as they see the staff and their parents and carers working together effectively.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and welfare is very effectively supported through the good deployment of staff. They are cared for by experienced, qualified staff, who continue to update their knowledge. All relevant checks have been made to ensure their suitability. Staff work well as a team and are clear about their roles and responsibilities, resulting in children's development and learning needs being met. Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. However, the organisation of some practices and routines, does not always promote children's good health. The present committee has a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and strives to ensure that the pre-school offers the best possible service to all of its children and their parents and carers. All required documentation is in place, well organised and stored confidentially.

Space is organised very effectively. For example, staff move back larger items of furniture to enable children to have space to comfortably march and swing their arms during lively music and movement sessions. The good pace of the sessions ensures that children are kept stimulated and have good opportunities to use and develop all of their skills. For example, there is time built into the daily routine for free play, physical exercise, arts and crafts and quiet times. As a result, children behave well and make good progress in their learning and general development. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. All staff are involved in understanding the aims of the activities that they provide for the children. For example, daily discussions ensure that staff understand their roles at the key activities and what the children

are intended to learn from them. This ensures that there is a high commitment to providing good quality education. Very good systems monitor the quality of teaching and the committee plays an active role in identifying the pre-school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, staff have annual appraisals, the committee regularly meet with the manager to discuss where changes need to be made, and parents offer verbal feedback about the provision. Good links with the adjacent school ensure that children make the transition from the pre-school to the primary school with relative ease. For example, they make visits throughout the year and watch school assemblies and sports days. The manager works directly with the staff and children, and provides a very good role model.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of nursery education, the setting received four recommendations. They were asked to develop the planning to identify how activities can be extended to provide sufficient challenge for more able children. Detailed planning of activities now clearly identifies ways to extend more able children's learning and how to support younger, less able children. The setting agreed to develop opportunities for parents to contribute to children's assessments and share their observations of their child's learning at home. Some progress has been made in this area. Parents and carers meet with staff after a settling in period and share information regarding what their child can already do at home. This is effective in giving staff a starting point upon which to plan further activities and learning opportunities on. An on-going process to allow parents and carers to contribute this type of information, is currently being considered and is identified as a further area for improvement in this inspection. The setting was also asked to extend opportunities for children to name and sound letters of the alphabet, write their own names, develop their awareness of numerals, independently access the computer, and express themselves freely and imaginatively during creative activities. The setting now routinely offers children activities covering all of these areas.

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to develop documentation relating to the administration of medication, a child being lost and child protection. These have now been updated and are in line with requirements as outlined in the National Standards. This ensures that up to date documentation underpins the care offered to the children. The setting agreed to enable children to access a variety of materials and tools during creative activities. Children now have independent access to a good variety of mark making tools to support their creativity. The setting was also asked to improve systems for recording and monitoring risk assessments of the premises. There are now comprehensive risk assessments in place covering the indoor and outdoor environment, which are undertaken on a daily, termly and yearly basis. This ensures the continued safety of children whilst attending the setting. Overall the setting has made good progress at addressing the recommendations from the last inspection, therefore improving all outcomes for children.

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 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):

- evaluate current hygiene practices to ensure that they are completely effective in promoting children's good health. This particularly relates to procedures for washing children's hands prior to eating, the use of soap and the system in place for freely accessing drinks.

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):

- put into practice and evaluate, on-going opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to their child's assessment records and share their observations of their child's learning at home (also applies to care)
- ensure opportunities are taken to extend children's knowledge and learning during daily routines and spontaneous situations that arise.

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