

Watery Lane Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 143030

Inspection date 30 April 2007

Inspector Sara Bailey

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Registered person Watery Lane 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 outstanding. 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?

Watery Lane Pre-School opened in 1990. It operates from an Elliot style building on the St. Michaels School site in Minehead, Somerset and serves the local area. There is one playroom with toilet, office and kitchen facilities off. There is a large, fully enclosed outside area for physical play and the children visit Forest School once a week for outside activities within the local community. The setting has a guinea pig, which the children help to care for.

There are currently 39 children from 2 years to 4 years on roll. This includes 36 funded 3 and 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00 and 13.00 until 15.30. Six part-time staff work with the children. The joint supervisors and deputy hold a level 3 qualification in Early Years. One member of staff is currently working towards a level 3 qualification in Early Years and another holds a level 3 qualification as a teaching assistant. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health and well being is effectively promoted and given the highest priority by all of the staff. For example, every day the children experience wonderful physical play outside, where they benefit from fresh air and opportunities to run, climb, balance and explore what their bodies can do. Children know the importance of drinking after exercise and the need to wear sunhats to protect them in the sun. Many children choose to spend the duration of the session playing outside, due to an exceptional free-flow system. There are many 'Forest School' style experiences set up in the shade to ensure children's safety in hot weather. For example, logs around a camp fire, habitats and dens. Children use their large motor skills replicating their experiences from weekly Forest School trips. For example, they use logs, large tractor tyres and ropes to build and explore.

Children independently use the toilet facilities and spontaneously wash their hands, using paper towels to dry them, which protects them from the risk of cross infection. Children are superbly monitored to ensure that children equally dry their hands after outside water play to prevent their hands becoming sore. Children can independently access tissues, which allows them to take responsibility for their own health and hygiene. Staff are positive role models for the children. They clean tables before and after snack using anti-bacterial spray, as well as every time a child sneezes at the table to further protect children from germs. The premises are very clean and well maintained with cleaning rotas to ensure positive hygiene practices are reinforced at all times. All staff either hold valid first aid certificates or they are booked on forthcoming training. This ensures that children's minor accidents can be confidently dealt with. All accident and medication records are accurate and countersigned by parents.

Children's dietary needs are met exceptionally well within the morning or afternoon session through healthy, nutritious snacks. A selection of fresh fruit is provided by the staff and on occasions supplemented by children. For example, a child brought in an orange as it began with an 'O' for the letter of the week at 'show and tell' time and then shared with staff and children. Staff are excellent role models as they talk about the nutritional value of food and are seen by the children to equally enjoy fruit with the children at snack time. The role-play area displays photographs of a variety of healthy food and promotes food from different cultures, which increases children's awareness. Children have easy access to fresh drinking water both inside and whilst playing outside. It is promoted with signs and labels to aid their independence. They are also given healthy choices at snack time with either water or milk, which further promotes their good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children learn about keeping themselves safe and take responsibility for their own safety through established routines and vigilant procedures. For example, weekly visits to 'Forest School' allows children to be adventurous and take risks within a safe, controlled environment. They learn about potential risks from plants, fire and through the use of tools. Their supervision is exemplary and discussions informative. Safety at the pre-school setting is equally as vigilant. For example, a daily risk assessment identifies and addresses any potential hazards. Staff commitment to safety is exemplary. They have considered every aspect of their daily routine and addressed it very effectively. For example, staff make their coffee in advance in the kitchen

which is out of bounds to children, so that by the time they access it anywhere near the children the boiling water has cooled. Fire drills are practiced frequently to ensure all children are familiar with the procedures. Candles are regularly used on the tables at snack time to celebrate birthdays or promote a relaxed atmosphere. Children are very knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe and confidently recall how to behave around fire. They are alerted to potential risks by warning triangles fixed around the room, for example, at electrical sockets, exits, mirror, kitchen and even the role play oven and microwave to link their play and learning. Door security is excellent and the monitoring of visitors highly effective. Children are also introduced to visitors to ensure they feel secure in their presence. Children self register themselves in the morning and are responsible for taking their laminated photographs with them to secure to the Velcro board, when they choose to play outside. This ensures staff are aware of who they are supervising and can maintain accurate head-counts. A password system for collection of children further promotes children's safety.

Children greatly benefit from the effective layout of the environment. They can easily and safely self-select toys and resources from low open shelving and clearly labelled drawers. Resources are plentiful both inside and outside, of good quality and well maintained. Many resources are natural materials or re-cycled. For example, logs, tractor tyres, drift wood, fir cones and household boxes.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as all staff have knowledge of the signs and procedures to follow in the event of being concerned about a child. Some staff are experienced and competent at dealing with child protection issues. The policy is comprehensive and includes information concerning allegations against staff, this is shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children of all ages thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. Younger children benefit from the staff's use of the Birth to three matters framework to ensure their play experiences are valuable and meet their individual needs exceptionally well. Staff provide highly effective support to children as they explore and experience wonderful indoor and outside play, which is exciting and innovative. For example, children explore soap flakes both dry and with water, whisks and powder paint added. Child-led play is expertly supported and enhanced through staff's excellent interaction.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children learn through rich, varied and meaningful experiences. Activities are planned really well using the six areas of learning, yet the routine is extremely flexible to further develop children's own ideas and suggestions. Staff are skilled at supporting children's learning with open ended questions to enable them to problem solve and make decisions. Children are extremely confident learners who provide their own challenges in their play. For example, using natural resources and re-cycled materials they busy themselves with imaginative role play situations. Children pretend to visit their Forest School, they put on their backpacks, sit inside tractor wheels as their minibus and practise their knots by excitedly tying staff to the trees! They re-enact cooking sausages on the camp fire, singing songs and looking for insects. Children spontaneously access magnifying glasses when they find a spider's nest, to closely examine their findings. They learn about mathematics through discussion about numbers of spiders and the patterns they have made in their web formation. Staff are skilled at encouraging children to think about quantities, for example "Are

there more or less than 10?". Children are extremely confident with numbers, they can count, identify small and large numbers, complete simple addition and subtraction through fun activities and know how bigger numbers are made up. For example, when a member of staff asks how to write the number 15 on the blackboard at registration time, she is told very quickly by several three and four year olds. Children are equally confident linking sounds and letters. They routinely explore different sounds and remember them through simple actions to emphasis their phonics. Many children can write their names with ease, forming letters correctly. Other children are assisted through routine labelling of their work, copying their names from their well used name cards. Some children can write many other words and all enjoy stories, which develops their vocabulary extremely well and their love of books. Children are showing a real understanding of words as they develop their joke-telling skills.

Children relish their outside play, which incorporates all of the six areas of learning. The staff provide classroom learning in an exemplary way in the outdoors environment. For example, children enjoy music while they play, they have unlimited access to sand, water and other natural materials, which they can mix with toy dinosaurs for example, or whatever the child chooses. Children are extremely creative with both imaginative play and in using craft materials. They engage excitedly in large chalk drawings on the tarmac, they use logs and wood to form habitats for their small world figures. Children spend long periods of time creating amazing junk-models, they develop an understanding of how to join objects together as they experiment with various types of sticky tape, string and fastenings. Children thrive on one-to-one activities with a member of staff. For example, each child makes their own plastic bottle greenhouse and plants either marigolds or a sunflower. They use tools, write their own labels and water their plants, learning about growth and the natural world. Children equally develop a real sense of understanding their local community through activities linked to the seaside, steam trains and tourism. For example, they make and serve cream teas to parents and role-play cafés.

Children's learning is carefully observed by very experienced and knowledgeable staff, who complete detailed progress reports on each child. Their progress along the stepping stones is clearly monitored and used to influence future planning in a highly effective way. For example, specific activities are highlighted to help a particular child develop a skill and children's preferred way of learning or favourite toys are used to engage them in meaningful play. Activities are evaluated to further assess children's learning and ensure individual needs are met in a comprehensive way.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children gain a well-developed respect for others and their beliefs, cultures and traditions through discussion, planned activities and resources, which promote positive images of diversity. For example, children use multi-cultural dressing up clothes, play people with different skin colours and using wheelchairs, as well as books, games and jigsaw puzzles. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported exceptionally well by staff to ensure they equally relish their time at the setting. Children's individual needs are extremely well understood and met through the appropriate grouping and one-one-one opportunities with staff. Every step of their progress is valued and recorded to help the child thrive and meet the targets on their Individual Education Plan. Staff and children enthusiastically use sign language to say 'Good Morning' at registration and to communicate at other times during the day. Children's Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They know the rules and routine of the sessions, which makes them feel secure and confident. They have warm, positive relationships with staff, which enables them to tell jokes, spontaneously burst into song when they are told it is a member of staff's birthday and have fun tying staff to trees! Children respond eagerly to requests to help pack away and take responsibility for their own actions. For example, a daily 'special helper' is an excellent role model to others, children spontaneously help without being asked and children tell staff if they think their peers deserve a reward for being kind or helpful. Children are praised constantly by staff, which builds their self esteem. The atmosphere at the setting is extremely happy and calm but very busy and productive.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children greatly benefit from the very effective sharing of information between staff and parents. For example, an informative notice board has photographs of staff and key-worker information. A daily diary is sent home for each child everyday, with specific details of activities enjoyed that day to enable parents to have valuable discussions at home, linked to their learning. Laminated photographs with captions and links to the Foundation Stage curriculum are used to help parents understand the six areas of learning and see their children enjoying a wide range of activities. Planning is displayed and explained to parents. Specific areas of the room have the learning intentions of different play materials displayed to further involve parents in their child's learning. Children's individual records are clear yet comprehensive, they include a parental assessment on admission and show parents their individual child's progress along the stepping stones. These are readily available at all times but specifically shared at consultation sessions. Parents views on the setting are also sought through regular questionnaires and suggested ideas immediately acted upon to further develop the provision.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is significantly enhanced by exceptional organisation. Every aspect of the daily operation of the setting is exemplary. For example, children are grouped to meet their individual needs. They benefit from a free-flow outside play arrangement, which enables the classroom learning to be undertaken outside in the fresh air. Staff are deployed very effectively to ensure children are very well supervised at all times and are dedicated at providing the most stimulating environment, both in the amount of resources which are out for children to access and in the staff's supporting role. For example, staff are fully involved in the children's play, they run around with the children and are skilled at looking to the children for direction and ideas. This setting is child-led in the most innovative way. Routines are flexible to enable children to fully engage in their play and planned activities adapted skilfully to fit the time restraints due to this. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Every aspect of the setting's documentation is professional, accurate and well maintained. A designated office area allows for children's records to be stored confidentially. Evidence of staff's suitability is held on file and the registration certificate clearly displayed.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The pre-school's joint supervisors share their roles and responsibilities really well to lead and motivate the staff group, who all work exceptionally well as a team. There are strong links with the school and committee, which is chaired by the school head. Staff are enthusiastic, dedicated and committed to maintaining a high standard and deliver a very effective curriculum. For example, they meet together on a weekly basis to discuss practices and ways to further meet children's individual needs. They complete regular self assessments to monitor, evaluate and identify ways they can develop.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care and education inspection in 2003 it was agreed to implement a key worker system. This has been effective at further meeting individual needs. Parents are well informed about who their individual child's key worker is, they are responsible for maintaining accurate records and sharing information with parents.

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 outstanding. 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

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

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