

Saplings Extended day pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	401764
Inspection date	17 May 2007
Inspector	Alison Romanczuk
Setting Address	Willow-Dene School, Swingate Lane ,Plumstead, London, SE18 2JD
Telephone number	0208 317 7544
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Registered person	The Committee of Saplings Pre-School
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Saplings Extended Day Pre-School has been operating in its current form since 2001. It is run by a management committee and operates from within Willow Dene nursery school. The group has sole use of a large group room and enclosed outdoor play area, and also has access to the nursery school's ball pool, adventure playground and two large halls. The pre-school is registered for 24 children from two years, 10 months to five years old of whom two can be aged under three years.

There are currently 23 children on roll, all of whom receive funded education. Some children attend on a full-time basis whilst others attend part-time. The setting supports children with special educational needs and is also able to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week, term time only for 38 weeks a year from 9.00- 12.30 mornings and some children stay until 15.30 on a Monday to Thursday. Four members of staff work with the children, all of whom hold childcare qualifications equivalent to NVQ level 3. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are healthy at the pre-school because all staff use appropriate procedures to ensure the environment is well managed and in a clean state. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection, for example, when reminding children to wash their hands and the children access the bathroom area with ease. Children are well cared for when they are unwell by staff who are attentive to their needs. Appropriate medication procedures are understood and well implemented by staff to meet this aim. Children's physical needs are well met in an environment where children can freely access fresh air in the garden area and in particular because the children have access to the school halls and ball pool area for energetic play.

Children are well nourished at the pre-school and staff are mindful of and clearly record any allergies or individual considerations that may exist. Children benefit from activities where they talk about healthy eating options and try a variety of food at snack time including yoghurt, dried fruits and on occasions sardines. They enjoy a choice of milk and water and those who stay for midday lunch time sessions are encouraged to bring a healthy selection of foods in their packed lunch.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle quickly because staff maintain a clean and stimulating environment for them by displaying children's artwork, pictures and posters around the pre-school. They have sufficient space to play in comfort and resources are stored in a way that encourages the children to access them. Equipment and play resources provided are clean, in good supply and well maintained. Informal risk assessments at the pre-school work generally well and staff are vigilant in their daily care of the children. Written risk assessments are not carried out in a rigorous way, however, making practice in this area inconsistent.

Despite this accidents are kept to a minimum and are recorded appropriately. Children are protected because there is always a member of staff trained in first aid on the premises. Children are safe from fire hazards because equipment is in place and regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely. Whilst written safeguarding procedures are not fully up to date, training aims are in place and staff have a sound knowledge about their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and benefit from being at the pre-school, develop good social relationships and are eager to explore the environment. They feel a sense of ownership and familiarity in their environment where their work is displayed and confidently access resources such as books, role play and creative materials that interest them and stimulate their development. Clear settling in policies allow children to separate from their main carer with ease and at their own pace. Children develop confidence because staff are attentive to their needs, calm and well established at the group.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good and the children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals as a result. Staff are attentive to the children and offer strong questioning to encourage them to think and communicate their ideas. In this way children's learning is extended well. Planning systems have been established to provide a good range of activities for children and these are clearly linked to the learning intentions and show, through observational and assessment records, how activities will be extended or adapted to help individual children progress.

Children are keen to learn and quickly settle and become involved in activities. They benefit from a range of creative and craft activities and gleefully use their musical instruments as they sing for the rain to stop. Children enjoy participating in group activities, for example at the play dough table, where they are able to chat independently about what they are doing. They share, take turns and develop simple mathematical concepts, for example, whilst counting their dough balls and worms. Children initiate conversations about their home life and experiences and enjoy listening to stories, pre-empting the story of Goldilocks, for example. They confidently experiment with pre writing tasks and some children write their own names with growing confidence.

Children independently incorporate counting during their play and can confidently count up to 10. They recognise and name shapes and use size and positional language in daily activities. The organisation of the pre-school allows children opportunities to develop their independence and as a result children play with resources which interest them and often take time to relax in the book corner looking at and re-enacting story telling. Children are sensitive to the needs of others and show care for the environment by asking about others' welfare, for example. Children enjoy and benefit from using the outdoor play area and when having access to the school's ball pool which supports their physical development, climbing and balancing skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show a sense of belonging when they share their experiences about their family and friends. They are introduced to a variety of cultural traditions through activities and resources which helps them to develop a positive attitude and respect for others. Those children who may attend with other languages quickly integrate and benefit from their additional skills in signing that staff use. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Systems for supporting children with special needs have been established and staff demonstrate a commitment to working with parents and outside agencies to support the welfare and development of children. Children's understanding of and awareness that children may have special needs is greatly enhanced because of the group's location within a special school. This enables them to share activities and meet with the children from the school on a regular basis.

Children behave well and work well together in response to the consistent boundaries and expectations of staff. Staff regularly praise children and recognise their achievements and the children clearly mirror this positive role modelling by praising each other and reminding each other to share. Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from this effective partnership and parents offer positive feedback. In particular children settle well in their own time and their individual needs are well met. They experience consistent care due to effective communication systems between parents and staff but the pre-school's complaint policy has not been updated. Parents receive valuable information about the curriculum for funded nursery education both in their prospectus and through regular reviews of the children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by staff who have been appropriately vetted, due to effective recruitment procedures. The organisation of the staff is effective to promote children's safety and welfare. There are suitable systems in place to deputise in the absence of the manager and the organisation of the staff within the group rooms is consistent with a well established staff team. Policies and procedures in place are fully understood by staff but some written documents have not been updated. As a result risk assessment, safeguarding and complaints policies do not reflect current guidelines. Staff training is positively encouraged to allow the team to have opportunities to develop their skills and abilities.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. There is a positive commitment to monitoring practice and staff are supervised daily. Good systems in place help to develop the provision and further improvements to planning have been undertaken in consultation with the local authority. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and how to apply this in practice to support children's development. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Staff have endeavoured to improve on policy details and contact numbers are now available for parents on notice board posters around the pre-school. The pre-school continues to update policies and procedures to keep in line with current regulations.

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.

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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):

- ensure written policies and procedures are regularly updated to reflect current guidelines

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):

- continue to build on good practice in the curriculum for funded three and four year old children

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