

Parkgate Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305236
Inspection date	29 June 2007
Inspector	Chris Scully
Setting Address	Parkgate Primary School, Brooklands Road, Parkgate, South Wirral, Cheshire, CH64 6SW
Telephone number	0151 336 1609
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Registered person	Parkgate Pre-School 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

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 satisfactory. 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?

The Parkgate Pre-School has been registered since 2002. It is owned and managed by a committee. The pre-school operates from a school room within Parkgate Primary School in South Wirral. Children have access to enclosed outdoor play areas. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school operates during school term times only, with sessions each weekday from 09.00 to 11.45. During the summer term an afternoon session is offered each Monday.

There are currently 39 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school serves the families of the local community. The pre-school is able to provide support for children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The pre-school employs six members of staff and has the additional support of a regular volunteer. Two staff hold early years qualifications and one has a teaching qualification. One member of staff is completing a Level 2 qualification and another is completing a degree in early years. The setting receives support from Sure Start.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean environment. They learn the importance of good hygiene routines through discussions with the staff and practical demonstrations. For example, staff wash their hands after messy activities and before preparing snack. Children are confident to wash their hands after going to the bathroom and eagerly tell staff that their hands are 'all clean now'. Effective systems are in place for if a child becomes unwell at the setting. This is supported by the well written sick child policy and the communicable illness policy. The effective implementation of these policies means the staff are able to contact parents quickly if their child is unwell and so reduce the risk of cross infection to other children. Most staff are trained in first aid, which means the children's accidents or incidents are handled well. Thus ensuring the children receive suitable care and attention. Staff are very aware of the children's individual health needs and provide appropriate support and attention. For example, they have attended a training course to ensure they are fully aware of the action to take should a child have an anaphylactic reaction.

Younger children's physical development is progressing well. They are confident to use a range of small resources. Children have appropriate opportunities to enhance their skills as they are encouraged to try new tasks, such as attempting to put butter on their scone at snack time. Older children's physical skills are developing well. They are able to skilfully use a range of outdoor equipment, such as wheeled resources and climbing apparatus. The children are keen to use the parachute with the staff as they eagerly recreate their visit to the aquarium. They pretend to be sea urchins searching for food as the parachute or waves wash over them. Children's smaller skills are progressing appropriately, for example, they are becoming skilled at using tools in the dough. Children are keen to try new ideas, such as practicing their balancing skills as they attempt to use surf boards.

Children enjoy a range of freshly prepared, healthy and nutritious snacks at the setting. These include scones, tortilla chips and dips, cheese and crackers. Children have a choice of drinks, which include fruit juice, water and milk. However, milk is not always appropriately stored. The staff are very aware of the children's individual needs and ensure that as far as possible the food provided does not contain nuts. Children are keen to tell visitors about their water bottles that they have brought in from home. They eagerly explain how their parent has bought them a pink one and how they can only have water in it, 'because its good for you'. This demonstrates that the children have independent access to fresh drinking water and are developing an understanding of a healthier lifestyle. Children enjoy a relaxed social occasion at snack time as they sit with their friends and staff and chat happily about the mornings events and their forthcoming trip.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and well maintained environment. They have sufficient space in which to move freely around the appropriately organised setting. This means they are able to play safely and in comfort. Children are developing confidence to self select their own resources, this is enhanced by the recent implementation of the High/Scope approach to learning which encourages children to have more choice and independence. Resources are well organised, which enables the children to choose their toys and resources from low-level

storage systems. Resources are of good quality, are safe and effectively meet the ages and stages of development of the children attending. Children have access to some resources depicting diversity.

Risks have been identified and minimised by the staff. Staff conduct a risk assessment of identified risks as and when they arise and seek appropriate solutions to minimise the risk to the children. However, there is no formal risk assessment in place, which encompasses all of the areas used by the children. Although staff state they carry out a visual check each day to ensure the children's safety. Effective systems are in place for keeping children safe on trips. Staff ensure they book reputable coach firms and that all children are able to wear a lap belt. They carry out regular 'head counts' to ensure all the children are present and make sure parent volunteers are fully conversant with the days events and their role on their trip. In taking this action the staff ensure children enjoy their day out and are kept safe at all times. Children are developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example, they are aware not to run in the room as they may fall and hurt themselves.

Staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues. A named child protection coordinator is in place. She is appropriately trained and is conversant in the child protection procedures. Most other staff are also trained in child protection and demonstrate an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This is supported by the child protection policy and information from the Local Safeguarding Children Board. However, the policy does not give appropriate information regarding allegations against staff, which hinders appropriate action being taken to address this issue.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled at the setting. They enter eagerly and chat happily to their friends and staff. This is effectively supported by the positive relationships the staff build with the children. The children are familiar with the daily routines, such as sitting on the carpet for circle time following their arrival. During registration they greet everyone with a rousing 'good morning'. Staff have a sound understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and adapt their planning to meet the diverse needs of the children attending. This means children are engaged in a range of purposeful play and learning experiences.

Children are eager to engage the staff in conversations and to present the items they have brought in for their 'show and tell' session at circle time. Younger children's progress is effectively recorded by the staff and is shared well with the parents. They enjoy listening to stories and are developing a fondness for books and reading. They are developing an understanding of how to handle books and to turn the pages correctly. This is enhanced by the support of older children who provide guidance and support to the younger children. All children receive good levels of positive interaction from the staff who spend considerable amounts of time talking listening and interacting with the children.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and provide a wealth of interesting activities in order to support the children's ongoing learning. This means children are becoming confident, interested learners who enjoy new challenges. Plans are created to cover all areas of the curriculum and encompass many spontaneous events that 'spark' the children's interest, such as the Australia celebrations or

playing in the snow. The staff are all skilled at asking open ended questions, which successfully fosters the children's ability to think, communicate and problem solve. For example, when setting the table for snack children are confident to count the children at their table and to collect the correct number of plates and cups. When asked how many more do we need? The children are confident to put forward their answer. Regular assessments of the children's progress are carried out by their key worker. However, these do not always identify the next steps in their learning and are not always clearly identified within the planning.

Children enter the room happily and are quickly absorbed in self chosen play and learning opportunities. They are familiar in their surroundings and are able to hang up their own coat and attempt to put them on when going outdoors. Younger children are aware of where their belongings go and happily direct their parents to their coat peg. Children show concern for others who are not present and through the very good support of the staff are able to explain their sense of loss for a friend. The children's communication skills are developing well. They are confident speakers both in small and large groups and are keen to express their ideas and feelings to the staff and their friends. Children are confident to self register on their arrival and are recognising a range of letter sounds, such as 'w' for Wednesday. Older children have the opportunities to attend on a Monday afternoon for a session with the reception teacher during the summer term. This effectively enables the children to develop additional skills as they make the move into the reception class. Children have many opportunities around the setting to practice their mark making skills, for example, by using magnetic letters and when playing with sand or dough. Some older children are able to write their own name on their work.

Children's mathematical skills are developing well. Most children count to five and 10 confidently with some children counting to past 20, with some additional support from staff. They learn about 'more' or 'less' than through songs and by the effective use of questioning by the staff. However, there are limited opportunities indoors for the children to identify numerals and their meaning. Older children are able to identify a range of shapes and enjoy recreating and identify patterns in the environment, for example, creating potato print patterns. Children are becoming confident to use positional language, such as in the middle when describing where items are. Children are developing an understanding of the wider world through topic work and spontaneous events, such as the Australia theme. This effectively captures the children's imagination as they explore the country and its people. The children are keen to try new ideas, such as creating wobble boards to make music and playing the didgeridoo. Children are keen to use every day technology, such as tape recorders and head phones to listen to stories and music. They are eager to use the programmable robot and are confident to make it move in the correct direction by using the correct buttons. Children are confident to tell staff which way it needs to go to complete the maze and are developing a good understanding of directional language.

Children's creativity is developing appropriately. Although some planned activities do not give children sufficient choice with regards to materials and the use of templates hinders their creativity. Having said that, children are able to freely express themselves when painting at the easel and when taking part in free creative experiences. Children's imagination is progressing well. They are confident to create a range of scenarios when playing in the home corner and are able to identify and negotiate their roles. For example, one child decided that they are to be the doctor and they are going to make the 'baby better'. They explain that they are to listen to the baby's chest with the stethoscope and expertly prescribed some medication to make them better. The children's imagination is effectively fostered by the support and imagination of the staff as they create tools to enhance the children's play. For example, by creating the large model plane that 'flew' the children to Australia and to Bondi beach to go surfing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children's individual needs, circumstances and preferences are known and are effectively met by the staff. Children are respected by the staff who value their ideas and discussions. The children are fully included in all of the activities provided, which are effectively adapted to meet their individual needs, ages and stages of development. Children learn about the wider world through topic work and discussions with the staff. They celebrate a range of festivals throughout the year, such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year. Children are also encouraged to talk about familiar events, for example, family birthdays and new babies. This means the children are developing positive attitudes to others. The children are developing a good understanding of their local community as they talk about and visit the parade, library and other local places of interest. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are well behaved. They respond well to the staff's requests, for example, to help tidy away their resources for snack. This is further enhanced by the positive attitudes of the staff who speak calmly to the children and provide opportunities for the children to identify why their behaviour is not appropriate. This successfully enables the children to explore what they are doing and to come up with an agreed solution. This means the children are developing a clear understanding of right and wrong. There are appropriate systems in place to support children with additional needs. A special educational needs coordinator is in post and has undertaken relevant training courses.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents of younger children are kept fully informed of their progress through daily discussions with the staff. All parents are kept fully informed about the type of activities their child is to be involved in and are provided with a range of ideas as to how to promote their learning at home. Several parents are volunteer helpers and attend the setting on a regular basis to support the children's learning. Regular newsletters ensure parents are informed about forthcoming events, such as new topics, end of term parties and outings. Regular open days enable parents to come in to view their child's work and discuss their achievements with their key worker and other staff. Parents state they are able to support their children's learning by bringing in items from home to support the current topic. Parents also comment upon the home, pre-school book, which gives valuable support to the children and provides parents with effective updates on their progress. Parents spoken to state their children are very happy at the setting and enjoy coming here. They also comment favourably upon the commitment of the staff and the support and care they provide to their children.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by qualified and experienced staff. They are well supported in all of the activities provided and have their individual needs met effectively. The Committee has a sound understanding of the National Standards. However, they have not formally informed Ofsted of the appointment of the new joint supervisor, which means they have not been submitted to a vetting procedure whereby information supplied to Ofsted is verified with the relevant sources. This is a breach of the National Standards. Having said that, all staff have been through a vetting procedure with the setting, which includes a criminal records bureau check (CRB). Staff are also requested to sign a statement confirming their ongoing suitability with regards to their health and CRB status. Staff are fully informed of their roles and responsibilities through

the induction systems and regular team meetings. All children are effectively supported by the staff in all of the activities provided.

The quality of the leadership and management is good. The strong leadership of the setting is highly committed to ongoing development of educative provision. They provide many opportunities for staff to attend training to enhance their skills and knowledge base. Regular planning meetings ensure all staff are involved in the planning and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The setting has good support from the school and reception teacher, which successfully enables them to provide additional sessions for those children starting school in the September. This provides a valuable experience for the children and helps prepare them for the transition from the pre-school to school.

Policies and procedures which contribute to the health, safety and well-being of the children are in place. However, there are omissions within the risk assessments and the child protection policy regarding the action to take should an allegation be made against a member of staff. Records and documentation are generally well maintained, however, the register does not show the actual times of children's attendance or the reason for their absence. All records pertaining to the staff are in place and are appropriately maintained. All staff have equal access to attend training courses in order to further enhance their knowledge and skills.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection three recommendations were raised in relation to care relating to the provision of outdoor equipment for younger children, consent for emergency treatment and the behaviour management policy. The setting has purchased some outdoor play equipment in order to support the younger children's development. Written consent has been sought from the parents for the seeking of emergency medical advice and treatment. The behaviour management policy has been revised to include the action to take should bullying occur at the setting. One recommendation was raised following the nursery education inspection in relation to the continued development of the planning systems to enable the children to make progress towards the whole range of stepping stones and early learning goals. Staff continue to adapt and enhance the planning systems to ensure they meet the diverse needs of the children attending. In addressing these issues the setting has improved upon the health, well-being and educative opportunities of the 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 complaint 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 satisfactory. 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):

- conduct a formal risk assessment of all of the areas used by the children
- ensure Ofsted is informed of any significant events
- revise the registration system to ensure the children's actual times of attendance is recorded and the child protection policy regarding the action to take should an allegation be made against a member of staff.

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):

- provide more opportunities within planned art and craft activities for children to express their creativity
- further enhance to assessment systems to ensure the next steps in the children development are clearly identified and are identified in future planning.

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