



SeeSaw Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127524
Inspection date	22 September 2005
Inspector	Annie Williams
Setting Address	Wingham Village Hall, School Lane, Wingham, Canterbury, Kent, CT3 1BD
Telephone number	07941 942299
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Registered person	SeeSaw 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

SeeSaw Pre-School opened in 1999 and is run by a management committee. It operates from the village hall in Wingham, near Canterbury, Kent. It has access to 2 rooms, toilets, and a kitchen.

A maximum of 16 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open 4 days a week term time, from 09.00 until 13.00. All children share access to a secure and enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 23 children aged from 2 to under

5 years on roll, 10 of whom receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area and surrounding towns. The pre-school has experience of supporting children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 3 staff members working with the children, two of whom have an Early Years qualification. All staff members attend short courses. The pre-school receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Effective practices, such as washing hands before eating and after visiting the toilet, helps children learn about good personal hygiene. Older children know the importance of washing hands and do so routinely. Younger children wash hands with gentle assistance from staff. The spread of infection is prevented through having a sick-child policy, which is understood by staff, using liquid soap and individual disposable towels, and following good cleaning procedures, which ensures that staff wear gloves when changing nappies and that toys are kept clean.

A current first aid qualification, held by all staff, medicine records and appropriate parents' permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, help staff act in the children's best interest should they have an accident or become ill whilst in their care.

The children's record forms detail their food allergies so that staff are aware of dietary requirements. In addition, all staff are trained in administering an epi-pen. As a result, they are able to act in the best interest of the children should an allergic reaction occur. Children's healthy diet is promoted through healthy snacks such as raisins, carrots and a variety of fruit. Children regularly get drinks at snack time. They also are offered water during outside play to keep them hydrated.

Parents provide packed lunches for lunch club. These are stored appropriately to ensure that the food remains fresh. However, the organisation of the lunch club does not fully reduce the risk of children swapping food. This is because lunch boxes are handed out to the children, who open them and start eating before staff are sat with them to supervise. Children, therefore, may access food that does not meet their dietary requirements.

Outside play is a popular routine feature. Children eagerly access the garden and clearly enjoy physical play. They run and play in the garden and use the equipment available. However, more able children are not sufficiently challenged in their physical play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The setting's toys and equipment are clean and maintained well. Staff members check and clean them regularly so that children are able to play freely, and safely, with them. The premises are safe and secure, with systems in place to prevent access to the building when the group is operating. The door, for example, is kept locked throughout the session. A visitor's book is in place and staff have a simple checklist to reduce risks. Clear procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children, and a "lost and uncollected policy" contribute to keeping the children safe. Procedures for outings, which are attended by most parents, are thought out well. Staff members also take first aid equipment, a mobile phone and contact numbers along with them. They are able, therefore, to act in the best interest of a child if necessary.

A fire evacuation plan is displayed and appropriate fire equipment is in place. Fire drills are practised so that the children are familiar with building evacuation procedures to ensure their safety.

The child protection policy, which is given to all parents, includes all the required information. Staff members are familiar with signs of abuse and neglect and know what to do to contribute to a safe outcome for children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The settling-in programme for children is good. They are welcomed into the group and encouraged to bring in a comfort toy if they wish. The established "key worker system" is effective in building relationships with the children. A planning framework for children under 3 years is being developed. Staff members will soon be trained in Birth to three matters, which will enable them to plan a range of purposeful activities that promote young children's development. An observation system, to inform the planning of activities and to identify children's next stage in their development, has not yet been established.

Children enjoy the freedom to play within the setting. They particularly enjoy outside play, for example, chasing and blowing bubbles around the garden. Messy play, such as finger painting with corn flour, is provided for the children. Children, therefore, explore and investigate through using their senses and making marks. Children bring in photographs of their family, which they proudly show to their friends. They also tell them about the special people in their lives. In this way they develop confidence and communication skills. Children are included in the full range of activities and daily routine. On occasions, some routines are not appropriate for the youngest children. These include "Jolly Phonic sessions" and large-group times.

Nursery Education

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is a good range of resources that support the children's learning. Staff work hard to prepare the environment for their arrival. However, the hall is large and there are too many activities to enable staff to

support children effectively. Planning is based on a theme and linked to the areas of learning. The staff observe the children, but are not yet used to identify their next steps in order to plan future activities. Activities, therefore, are not always appropriate for all the children.

The manager and staff welcome the children. As a result, children are generally happy within the setting. They select from a range of activities, which the staff set out. Older children visit the toilet independently, while younger ones do so with the gentle support of staff. Opportunities to further promote the children's independence, for example, allowing them to pour their own drinks, are sometimes missed. Most children readily approach adults and their friends to engage in conversation and play. They speak out confidently at circle time and particularly enjoy responding to the puppets. They receive regular opportunities to recognise their names; older children select the correct name-card to stick onto the apple tree at self-registration and younger ones do so with the staff's sensitive support. Children also have name-cards at snack time.

Children have opportunities to make marks. However, more able children are not always given an opportunity to label their own work or write for a purpose in the context of their role play. Some attention is given to linking sounds to letters through the use of singing Jolly Phonics at whole-group time. However, this does not always hold the attention of younger children. Staff sometimes point out everyday words, such "open" and "closed" on the shop-sign. However, not all of them promote this fully.

Counting is a regular feature of the session. Children count the carpet squares and the number of children present at circle time. They are encouraged to count during their play, such as how many pieces of cake are in the house. Children enthusiastically join in rhymes and songs like, for example, 5 little monkeys swinging in the tree, which help them to understand simple calculation. Numbers are displayed in the setting but staff miss opportunities to point these out to the children. Children explore shape and size throughout the play session. They fill containers with water and rice, complete puzzles and construct using a variety of bricks. Overall, staff miss opportunities to promote mathematical development in the daily routine.

Children find out about the local and wider world through community visits to, for example, the play gym, and through walks. Good emphasis is placed on developing children's sense of time through simple, but effective, ideas which are implemented by the staff. These include the attractive time-line, with photographs of the routine, and the use of a tambourine to indicate the time to tidy up. Construction toys are available each session, providing children with the opportunity to make models. A tray containing interesting objects, like shells, feathers and a magnifying glass, is available in the science area. However, the organisation of the setting, and lack of staff members in these areas, does not encourage children to make effective use of the resources and extend their learning.

Children engage in activities requiring hand-eye coordination and show control when using tools and materials. They roll out dough, use cutters, manipulate small-world toys, use paint brushes and glue spreaders. Children move with confidence around the setting, showing an awareness of themselves and others. They explore a range

of media, such as paint and glue. Staff provide opportunities for children to experience a range of art and craft activities. Although the staff's pre-cut templates reflect their hard work, they do not always enable children to use their imagination fully. A carefully prepared role play area encourages children to engage in pretend play, which is based on their own experiences. They cook dinner, visit the shops and pretend to be the shop keeper.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Partnership with parents is good. The staff work hard to develop relationships with the parents and communicate effectively with them. Communication aids include notice boards, daily chats, a contact book and a home link sheet. As a result, parents are well informed about the setting and their child's educational programme. Children generally behave well. They learn about the importance of sharing and being kind to each other through gentle reminders from staff. In addition, they join in the "tidy up song" and help to take care of their environment. Outings, which are spread throughout the year, help children to find out about their local and wider world, including, for example, local walks and trips to the play gym.

Children with special needs are welcomed into the setting, where they can play alongside their peers. The staff are familiar with how to include children in the routine. There is also a written policy. However, not all staff are familiar with the Code of Practice for the Identification of Special Educational Needs. There is a disabled toilet on site and a nappy changing area. At present, systems for disposing of dirty nappies may not be positive for all children.

Children's personal cultures are successfully acknowledged within the setting. A child record form and a home link book helps staff provide appropriate care. In addition, festivals from around the world are included in the planning, and children's birthdays are celebrated. Around the setting there are limited posters that reflect positive images. However, there is some play equipment to extend the children's knowledge and understanding of differences within our society. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, therefore, is fostered appropriately.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff work well together as a team and regularly hold meetings in order to plan the educational programme. In addition, they attend annual appraisals with the committee. Leadership and management is satisfactory. Systems for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the educational programme are not fully effective. As a result, strengths and weaknesses in the programme have not yet been identified. The organisation of the setting is not completely successful. Staff work hard to set out many activities for the children. However, there are too many activities for them to manage while trying to support children effectively. Although snacks provided for the children are very healthy and varied, snack time is too long and staff leave activities

to answer the phone, the door bell or to collect fruit. As a result, children are left unsupported and sometimes end activities prematurely. All the required documentation for the safe and efficient management of the setting is maintained in order to promote the children's welfare and care. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last Ofsted inspection, the pre-school was asked to devise a system for planning and implementing a suitable range of activities for children under 3 years, appropriate for their stage of development. They were also asked to ensure that safe and hygienic practices are in place for washing hands, that the appliances meet the Health and Safety Executive recommendation, that the premises are maintained at an adequate and comfortable temperature, and to produce an action plan to show how the supervisor meets the recommended qualification.

The pre-school have begun to develop activities for children under 3 years by using the Birth to three matters framework. Washing hands is now safe and hygienic, and appliances are checked in accordance with health and safety. A new heating system has been installed and the premises are maintained at a comfortable temperature. A new supervisor, who holds an appropriate childcare qualification, has been appointed.

The pre-school was also asked to increase staff's knowledge and understanding of how to plan, use and extend daily activities and routines in order to help children make effective progress towards the early learning goals in all 6 areas of learning. Furthermore, they were to improve the staff deployment and organisation of the setting, to improve the use of assessment to inform the planning, and to develop the leadership and management. The pre-school now plan using the 6 areas of learning to ensure that there is a balance across all areas. However, the use of assessment to inform the planning, the organisation of the setting and the development of the leadership and management remain recommendations from this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- provide more able children with suitable challenges in their physical play
- organise lunch time to ensure that there is no possibility of children swapping food
- develop positive ways to dispose of nappies

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):

- re-organise the snack time and the activities on offer so that they are more manageable and children are better supported
- develop the use of observations to inform the planning and ensure that activities are based on what children already know and what they need to learn next
- develop rigorous systems for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the educational programme
- improve the mathematical programme through the daily routine and free play.

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