

First Stop Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251484
Inspection date	15 June 2007
Inspector	Deirdra Keating
Setting Address	Trimley St Mary Primary School, High Road, Trimley St. Mary, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 0ST
Telephone number	07961 556209
E-mail	
Registered person	First Stop 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 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?

First Stop Pre-School is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the pre-school. It opened in 1986 and operates from a timber building in the grounds of Trimley St. Mary Primary School. The pre-school opens five days a week during term time and sessions run from 09:00 to 11:30 and from 12:50 to 15:20. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 68 children from three to five years on roll. Of these, 65 receive funding for early education. The setting supports a number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school currently employs seven part-time staff. Of these, six have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is extremely well promoted because staff follow thorough and consistent procedures that are documented and shared with parents. An exclusion policy ensures children are protected from cross-infection and cared for appropriately should they become ill. Excellent information regarding illness and exclusion periods is shared with parents in order to best promote children's health. A bathroom with low-level sinks and appealing soap dispensers enables children to wash their hands and use the toilet independently. Children are protected well from accidents as a fully stocked first aid box is available and all staff have a current first aid certificate. All accidents are clearly recorded and signed off by parents. Written consents are carefully sought in order that children can receive the best care in the event of an accident or emergency.

Children benefit from an extremely healthy diet. They enjoy varied, well presented nutritious food and snacks, which comply with all special dietary requirements. Snacks feature crackers, cheese and freshly chopped fruit and vegetables. Staff sit with children and enjoy a social snack time where they encourage good table manners and discussion. Free access to drinking water enables children to remain well-hydrated throughout the session. Food is prepared in the kitchen where high standards are maintained by staff who have attended food hygiene training. Packed lunches brought in from home are stored at the correct temperature. Children have the benefit of daily fresh air as they spend a good proportion of their time outside. They enjoy free access to the well equipped outdoor play area where staff are careful to ensure that children are protected from the sun. Children enjoy a wide range of physical exercise. They go over to the school hall and enjoy action songs and games where they observe changes in their bodies as they get warm.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment that is child-friendly and cosy. The premises are well maintained and provide an environment in which children can play, eat and rest comfortably. The pre-school has been attractively decorated with painted cupboards and has defined areas. A broad range of resources are stored at a low-level which promotes children's independence. Storage units are labelled with text and provide a balanced range of activities that are interactive and promote children's learning in all areas. Toys for younger children are stimulating and well planned to provide a range of sensory experiences. Treasure baskets have been creatively developed to provide a range of natural household objects and materials. This inspires younger children to express their feelings using all of their senses.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where staff take positive steps to minimise all risks. The premises are secure and access to the provision is monitored at all times. A visitor's book is stringently maintained. Children are kept safe during outings as consent is obtained in advance and increased staffing ratios ensure that children are fully supervised. Regular fire drills that are documented ensure that children know what to do in the event of a fire. Fire prevention equipment is all in place and checked regularly. Children learn about safety through topics where visitors encourage children to think about their personal safety such as crossing the road.

Children are protected well from harm as staff have a good understanding of their role in safeguarding children. A written policy is available detailing all relevant contact numbers and procedures should a concern about a child arise. A written statement is clear, up to date and displayed on the notice board for parents. All staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure children's safety and well-being. Children are protected by knowledgeable experienced staff who have attended relevant training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are motivated to learn through the range of appealing resources that support their care, learning and play. There is a good range of activities available that are carefully planned and rotated to maintain interest and promote all areas of development. A key worker system enables staff to know children well and maintain good working relationships with children and families. A flexible settling in policy ensures that parents can leave children according to the individual needs of the child. They settle very quickly with no concern about separation from their parents. A picture time line enables children to know what happens next during the session in order that they feel secure. Children are busy as they are engaged in a varied and stimulating range of activities that are appropriate to their stages of development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have good a knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Staff all contribute to the comprehensive planning which clearly identifies learning intentions for children. Staff support children extremely well to ensure that activities are inclusive to all the children. A key worker system enables staff to evaluate plans using observations linked to learning intentions. This ensures that next steps can be identified and children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Good clear records are built on written observations which staff regularly evaluate in order to collate profiles and assess children. However these are not proactively shared with parents. Staff support children well during activities providing challenge with open ended questions and extending and consolidating children's learning. They show a good understanding of behaviour management and manage children sensitively giving good explanations and using praise to reinforce positive behaviour. Topics are supported by a good range of resources which staff proactively source. Good use has been made of the space and the session is well-paced allowing children time to sustain long periods of uninterrupted play and providing a good balance of adult-led and child-led activities. Varied and interesting activities are planned to capture children's interest and meet their different learning styles.

Children develop confidence and a strong sense of self through positive interaction with staff. They are growing increasingly independent as they help clear away the snack and manage developmentally appropriate tasks with support. Children work as part of a large group as they play games taking turns and following a set of rules. They show an interest in cultural differences and learn about a range of festivals and traditions. Children are making good progress in their early reading and writing skills. They write their names on their work and proudly show staff. Children enjoy a large group story where the use of a magnetic story board enhances their learning. They enthusiastically take part and are animated and interested as they use the story props. Staff extend the children's learning as they follow their interest and children confidently interact with one another taking turns in conversation and offering ideas.

Children are making good progress in their mathematical development. They count as part of their daily routine. Games where they count steps and stories where they count down from five to one, all reinforce their learning. A good range of equipment is available to support children's mathematical development, they use scales, an abacus and sort dinosaurs according to size and colour. Children use size language as they cut string for a craft activity. There are many opportunities for children to be creative. An exciting range of tactile and appealing craft materials are available for children to use in their own preferred style and method. Children engage in imaginary play where they recreate a hairdressing shop. The session routine allows children the space and time to develop their imaginary ideas and act out their roles.

The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is supported well as they explore and investigate different materials using all of their senses. For example, playing with sand, ice, cornflour and shaving foam. The children have access to an extremely well resourced outdoor area where all areas of learning are reflected. Water pulleys, homemade instruments and construction are all available for children to experiment and explore. Children are developing good IT skills, they operate the mouse with skill and use positional language as they steer programmable toys using a remote control. Children display good dexterous skills as they use scissors and glue. They manipulate dough using a range of tools and learn to thread using wooden beads. Children negotiate space well as they run around outside and show respect for each other's space as they play together using ride-on toys. Weekly sessions in the school hall enable children to move in a range of ways as they play games and enjoy fun and interactive tapes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The children in this setting are valued and have an excellent sense of belonging. Staff actively seek detailed information to ensure they can best meet children's individual needs. All children are included as knowledgeable and experienced staff support and adapt activities extremely well to promote full inclusion. Different sized groups encourage children to socialise and build relationships with each other. Children gain an excellent sense of community through events such as the local carnival for which they make paper faces. They take part in fundraising activities that are relevant and meaningful to the children and families who use the setting. Children learn about other cultures and beliefs through an excellent range of resources that are loaned to the setting to help children understand their differences and similarities. They celebrate many festivals including Chinese New Year, and Saint Patrick's Day where an Irish dancer visited the setting. A broad range of resources such as posters, figures and games are used to reflect positive images of wider society and cultural diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The setting has an extremely positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff have undertaken extensive training to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This enables them to meet individual needs well, complying with the required code of practice. Clear documentation details all support and has been developed well by staff for children's records. Staff have an excellent understanding of how to best support children, working closely with parents and other professionals. Staff actively encourage input from parents and utilise support and additional resources extremely well in order to meet the needs of each child. The setting has wheelchair access and a large and spacious toilet facility.

Children understand good responsible behaviour as staff follow consistent strategies and have a few simple rules in order that children can understand and remember them. A clear behavioural

policy details guidelines regarding behavioural expectations in the setting. Behaviour is consistently good throughout the session and any minor disputes are dealt with sensitively by staff. Staff use strategies such as distraction and explanation. They are warm and encouraging offering lots of praise and positive reinforcement to children. Children know right from wrong and are considerate of one another. Any behavioural incidents are noted and sensitively shared with parents at the end of the session.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are warmly welcomed into the colourful setting where there is a large and informative notice board. This keeps them up to date on all aspects of the group's practice. A colourful display with photographs of children taking part in activities gives parents an overview of the children's learning. However, records and profiles are not readily available for parents to share and contribute to. New parents are welcomed in by extremely friendly staff where trial sessions are adapted to suit the needs of the children. A parent rota involves parents, carers and grandparents and enables them to see their children having fun during the sessions. Relevant contact numbers for Ofsted are clearly displayed and policies are proactively shared. A clear complaints policy is available should it be required. Detailed and informative written agreements provide details of children's needs in order that they can be looked after according to their parents' wishes. Parents speak very highly of the setting and 'approachable staff' and are extremely happy with their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for well by suitable adults who are motivated, dedicated and have had all the necessary checks to ensure children's safety. Good, effective policies are in place to support staff and ensure they are suitable to work with children. Good staff ratios are maintained, however staff deployment is not always effectively organised to fully promote children's learning and development. Children's care, learning and play is supported well by the policies and procedures within the comprehensive operational plan. This underpins all areas of practice and is well-organised and illustrated with photographs. All documents are in place to support the smooth running of the pre-school and these are regularly reviewed and stored securely. Arrival times are managed well, however the organisation of collection times is not always effective, which could compromise children's safety. Staff are well qualified and work closely with the management committee.

The leadership and management is good. The group is led by joint play leaders who are extremely experienced and dedicated. They work closely with the management committee and administrator to form a dynamic team. All staff attend regular meetings where they review the effectiveness of the curriculum planning. This ensures that the quality of nursery education is adapted accordingly to meet the individual needs of the children. Staff work closely with an early years advisory teacher to ensure that teaching methods are inclusive and effective. Self-evaluation has been carefully considered with areas highlighted for development, this forward planning ensures that the setting continuously improves. Job descriptions and an effective appraisal process ensure that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and their training needs are identified. The setting is committed to ongoing professional development and supports all training requirements. Extremely good links with the primary school ensure that children have a smooth transition into school. Staff take children over weekly in order that they can adapt to the new environment and meet the different members of staff. All required documentation and consents are in place to ensure that children are looked after according to their parents' wishes. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to consider how to word the complaints procedure to include the address and telephone number of Ofsted and to reword the policy to include bullying. These have both been addressed and policies and procedures include the correct details. Consequently information for parents and staff has been updated and has the right wording.

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):

- ensure that staff are deployed effectively to maintain children's safety and welfare
- review the organisation to effectively manage the safe collection of children

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 opportunities for parents to receive regular information and share records of children's progress regarding nursery education.

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