

Toad Hall Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	117243
Inspection date	26 November 2007
Inspector	Lorna Brackstone
Setting Address	St Gabriels Church Hall, Hyde Park Road, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 4JN
Telephone number	01752 225102 or 0771 2263412
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Registered person	The Trustees of Toad Hall 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?

Toad Hall Pre-School opened in the late 1960s and moved to its present premises in 1997. It operates from a large church hall in a residential area, two miles from the centre of the city of Plymouth. There are currently 58 children aged from three to five years on roll. This includes 52 funded three and four year olds. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Children attend a variety of sessions. Sessions are from 09.15 to 11.45 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and from 12.45 to 15.15 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Nine staff work with the children, all of whom have early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. It has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards for its provision and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in the exceptionally clean and hygienic setting. Adults consistently promote independent self-care skills and, consequently, children go to the toilet on their own and know that they must wash and dry their hands afterwards. Adults are excellent role models for keeping healthy, and as a result, children have a very good understanding of the need to use clean hands to select snacks and drinks from a healthy choice. This ensures that cross-infection is not an issue.

Regular country dancing sessions ensures that the children keep fit and active. Staff remind them to check how fast their hearts beat after this activity and this enables them to start to develop a very good understanding of the effect exercise has on their bodies. Although there is no area for the children to play outside, the excellent range of physical activities organised within the hall develop their physical skills exceptionally well. A climbing frame helps the children to build up their sliding and jumping techniques. An indoor obstacle course ensures that the children are challenged as they skilfully manoeuvre their pedal cars into the carwash. Children have ample opportunities to benefit from fresh air, by enjoying activities, such as planting flowers outside and hanging up washing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are extremely skilful in the way that they create such a stimulating and safe environment from a hall that is used for other purposes. Colourful displays of the children's work and interesting banners brighten up the premises and make them much more child friendly and welcoming. The creation of exciting learning zones, such as craft areas and book corners, stimulates them extremely well in their learning. Resources are easily accessible and this encourages children's decision-making skills because they can choose what they would like to play with.

High quality safety measures ensure that the children cannot leave the premises unsupervised. The emergency evacuation plan is practised each term so that the children are confident about what they should do if the need arises. The presence of a fire blanket in the kitchen is a very responsible safety precaution to have and the installation of a smoke alarm shortly will enhance this.

The children's welfare is paramount. Staff hold high level first aid qualifications and have a very deep understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to safeguarding young children. The detailed accident reports ensure that the children are looked after very well. Parents are immediately contacted ensuring that children are very quickly reassured.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The children achieve extremely well because staff have an excellent understanding of the way in which these youngsters learn. Very well planned activities ensure that the children receive an excellent and well-balanced programme of work. Resources are exceptionally well chosen and engage the children in their learning. Consequently, they are happy and eager in their work

and play. They separate quickly from their parents and this shows that they feel secure and enjoy their time at pre-school. Staff praise them for their efforts and this helps the children feel confident.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The stimulating activities offered motivate the children and they concentrate very well. Children show high levels of curiosity when they watch glittery ice cubes melt in water and are excited when they successfully finish a large tower using building blocks. They listen carefully to letters in the alphabet and look for words that begin with the same letters. They independently look at picture books and read pretend stories to each other. Familiar tales, such as *The Three Little Pigs*, are used extremely well as a vehicle for learning, for example, they learn all about the different types of materials the pigs used to build their houses and recognise straw and bricks. They enjoy recognising word patterns and repeat phrases, such as 'I'll huff and I'll puff' and 'I'll blow your house down'.

Children's mathematical skills develop very thoroughly. Shape and space are recognised when the children match their squash, water and milk containers onto allocated areas marked on the table. They use their counting skills quickly and successfully to check how many of their friends are present for a session. The rich opportunities for singing enable the children to concentrate on repeated phrases and actions. The manner in which they all enthusiastically join in, for example, 'There was a princess long ago' shows how this is successfully achieved. Their creative skills are well developed because they are given very good opportunities to paint, draw and model from clay and play dough. Children make extremely good use of the extensive range of resources to design and make. They confidently engage in simple computer programmes and skilfully use the mouse as a control panel.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children develop their personal, social and emotional skills extremely well and consequently feel very much part of the pre-school community. All of them make a very good contribution to the sessions because they feel supported by their own key worker who ensures that their individual needs are met. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Small group time is special and each child has a chance to speak and express their views and opinions. They learn to take turns and listen carefully to the other members of the group. The children develop responsible behaviour and share how they feel when they are 'happy or sad'. Positive techniques are used to encourage good behaviour and children are proud of the stickers they receive as rewards. The regular country dancing activity ensures that the children work well with a partner as they promenade up between their peers. Their ability to remember to respond to an instruction and be ready when it is their turn makes a very positive contribution to the rest of their dancing community.

The children develop a very good understanding of the diverse world in which they live through the well chosen books in the library area. They celebrate Islamic festivals and a trip to Pennywell Farm helps them to gain a good knowledge of the Christmas story. This is because they re-enact the Nativity story amongst living farmyard animals. The opportunities to learn different routines, such as Maypole dancing, enhance their cultural development well.

Children who have learning difficulties or disabilities are helped to make a positive contribution through well supported intervention programmes. The close links established with external agencies ensure that the pre-school staff know what specialist support individuals require.

Personalised timetables are drawn up and presented in a visual way and this enables them to feel part of the wider community. Children who use English as an additional language are integrated well into the setting through a good level of support and the use of successful integration strategies such as signs which use their home language.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. This partnership is extremely effective and supports the children's learning very well. Parents are welcomed into the setting and kept well informed by the wide variety of information available to them on the notice board. This includes a detailed overview of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The planned activities over a two week period ensure that the parents know what their children are doing. They also learn how this fits into the progressive stepping stones towards the early learning goals. It also supports them in following through activities at home. Parents are provided with detailed reports of how their children are progressing in each of the areas of learning. This is illustrated very well through photographic evidence and examples of work. Staff in the setting fully understand the need for confidential discussions with individual parents. This is done sensitively and in the privacy of a designated area.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The required documentation is fully in place and registers clearly record arrival and departure times. Staff employed are well qualified and keep abreast of changes to the early years curriculum. Excellent adult to child ratios are maintained. The routine of each session is extremely well organised, and before the children arrive the stark hall is quickly transformed into a stimulating learning environment. The sessions are effectively organised so that the children have access to a balance of both, organised learning activities and free play opportunities. Staff skilfully reorganise activities whilst whole group activities take place and this means that value learning time is never lost.

Leadership and management of the nursery education are excellent. There is a low staff turnover but induction procedures are clearly outlined. This ensures that the children, and their parents and carers, experience familiarity and security. Senior staff are highly effective in evaluating their own policies and procedures carefully, using nationally recognised models to test their evaluations and identify any areas requiring improvement. Excellent use is made from the support and guidance received from the local authority to ensure that they are keeping up to date and maintaining high quality provision. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre-school setting was asked to ensure that the person in charge was appropriately qualified. Since then both the person in charge and her deputy have undertaken training and are now fully qualified. At the time of the last inspection child protection procedures were not fully in place. This has been fully rectified and the arrangements shared with parents. Both these improvements have had a significant impact on improving and promoting exceptional outcomes for 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 that 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

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