



Stay & Play Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY288517
Inspection date	07 July 2005
Inspector	Felicity Gaff

Setting Address	Felbridge Village Hall, Crawley Down Road, Felbridge, Surrey, RH19 2PP
Telephone number	01342 326174
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Registered person	Emma Louise Winter
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Stay and Play Pre-School is an established group which has been under new management since 2004. It is a privately owned pre-school offering sessional care that operates from Felbridge Village Hall in Felbridge, East Grinstead. The pre-school serves families from the surrounding residential area.

The provision is registered for thirty-three children and is open during school term

times for five days a week from 09:00 to 12:15. On the last day of each term there is one afternoon session available for the older children from 12:45 to 15:30. There are currently forty-seven children aged from two to under five years on roll who attend for a variety of sessions and twenty-eight of these receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs.

There are twelve members of staff, eight of whom hold recognised early years qualifications while the other four are currently working towards a relevant qualification.

The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn how to safeguard their own health as they practise generally good routines for personal hygiene and choose from healthy options at snack time. Staff take positive steps to improve the snacks offered and monitor the outcomes to ensure children's health is enhanced. For example, they noticed an improvement in children's behaviour when they stopped offering squash. However, children occasionally use a communal hand washing bowl before eating which puts them at risk of water-borne infections and they are unable to decide for themselves when they need a drink. Staff liaise closely with parents to ensure any dietary requirements are understood and met and maintain all the required documentation to support children's welfare. Children enjoy daily provision for vigorous physical play either in the adjacent hall or outside in a public playground. Older children develop good skills as they climb, swing and slide, although staff do not consider how to use the apparatus to challenge children and extend their skills. Staff sometimes set arbitrary limits on how children may use the apparatus. This hampers children's development of an understanding of their own skills and limitations that can help them to protect themselves from harm.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in appropriate premises and use a nearby, fully enclosed public playground for outdoor play. Staff have very good procedures for escorting children to and from the playground and ensure their safety by establishing well-understood procedures for using the equipment. The setting also has shared use of a large hall on the same premises so children have access to active play every day. Although there is direct access to a large grassed area, it is underused as a resource to extend children's first-hand experiences because suitable fencing is not in place. Staff act effectively to minimise identified hazards indoors, for example by restricting access to hazardous areas of the premises. Suitably sized furniture allows

children to play comfortably. However, they are unable to relax, rest or enjoy books quietly because no suitably furnished, comfortable area is provided. Toys and play materials are age-appropriate but children's choices are restricted to those which staff put out for them. Staff provide limited resources to support creative and imaginative play, particularly for children using the smaller room. Therefore children lack opportunities to express themselves through a wide range of satisfying, open-ended activities. Staff do not use easily accessible and clearly labelled storage to help children learn to reach and replace play materials safely. Children scatter construction materials across the room and so are at risk of falling over them. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of child protection issues and know how to protect children by reporting concerns about their well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel secure in the generally welcoming atmosphere because the staff work closely with them and take a genuine interest in what they do. Staff talk to the younger children about colours and textures as they paint at easels and encourage them to experiment, for example by applying paint with their hands and fingers as well as with brushes. Children relish the sensation of thick paint on their hands and look closely at the colours they make, although this is not always developed to challenge older children. Key workers maintain records of what children do. However, as they do not work closely with their groups they are unable to plan specific activities to ensure individual children make progress.

Children are friendly and cooperative; they play together harmoniously and solve disagreements skilfully. They enjoy the daily opportunities for active outdoor play. Staff are caring and considerate but are often too quick to offer children assistance. They ask questions but do not allow children time to think before suggesting answers for them. They do not plan how they will present activities to enable children to solve problems practically for themselves. For example, children were asked to compare a contrasting selection of bats, racquets and balls in a confined indoor space where they were unable to test them practically.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Children make insufficient progress because the staff have little understanding of the Foundation Stage. Staff plan a range of themes and record some interesting and well-resourced ideas for activities under each area of learning but fail to identify what they want children to learn from them. They do not plan a rich variety of absorbing, open-ended activities that arise from children's needs, wants and interests. As a result they overlook opportunities for children to observe, investigate and describe the world about them. Staff do not recognise the difference between adult and child led activities. Therefore children do many repetitive and over-directed tasks such as drawing a specific picture or copying a pre-determined model.

Staff observe and make notes of what children do. They keep samples of children's work and sometimes write comments to explain what children did or conversations

about their work. These are usually dated and are retained. However, comments are frequently brief and it is often unclear what children know and understand or whether they have made progress. Staff do not use their observations to plan for children's future learning to ensure their individual needs are met.

Children are at ease in the setting; they form good relationships with staff and are friendly and co-operative. They develop appropriate social skills as they share snacks although they do not develop their physical skills and self-confidence by preparing these or pouring their own drinks. Staff do not plan how role-play and small world activities will be introduced, developed and extended. This restricts children's ability to develop their language skills or to explore social situations and the needs of others through imaginative play. Practical craft activities are often adult-planned with little scope for creativity. Children do not experience a rich variety of creative experiences in two and three dimensions, selecting their own resources from a wide range of stimulating materials to solve problems. For example, staff asked children to copy the Olympic flag on to paper while the adults solved and executed design problems, such as attaching a flag pole. Consequently, children are rarely able to plan, experiment and refine their own ideas.

Literacy and mathematical activities do not often grow out of children's first-hand play experiences and staff do not adapt them to meet the needs of individual children, including those with special needs. Children learn to recognise their own names as they find their own handprints on arrival and play simple number games. However, formal handwriting and letter recognition tasks are over-emphasised and staff do not consider children's readiness to benefit from the activities provided. Children do not practise their emergent reading, writing and mathematical skills through well-planned, open-ended role-play scenarios. As a result, their interest is not engaged and learning is limited.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and their families are at ease in the setting because staff promote close partnerships with the parents. Parents receive clear written information about the setting before their child attends. Staff encourage parents and carers to visit with a child before admission and to stay with them as long as they wish. This helps children settle confidently. Staff work with parents and outside agencies to identify any special needs and develop individual education plans to help children with additional needs make progress. There are ample opportunities for staff and parents to exchange information, both formally and informally, to ensure individual needs are understood and to promote consistency of care. Overall, the partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Staff work closely with parents and other agencies to identify any special educational needs. Parents of children with additional needs feel that they are very well supported by staff and that their children make good progress. However, staff working with older children in the smaller room fail to adapt the activities they plan to meet identified individual needs.

Children begin to learn to respect cultural diversity as they celebrate festivals from different cultural traditions such as Divali, Christmas or Chinese New Year. However, there are few resources reflecting positive images of ethnic diversity or disability to help children learn to value difference and to become aware of the wider world. Although staff play with the children and talk to them they do not always value the contributions children make themselves which does not build their self-confidence. For example, staff often give children insufficient time to express their ideas during discussions and call them from their freely-chosen, purposeful play to do adult-directed 'work' activities.

Children play together harmoniously and staff use positive behaviour management techniques such as praise, explanation and encouragement. Older children understand the need for rules to enable everyone to play together and can tell staff what they are. They negotiate skilfully with each other, for example four children discussed sharing the trampoline fairly and safely and successfully agreed how to take turns. However, the organisation of play materials in the larger play room is poor; children scatter small parts and sometimes kick them around the room. Staff do not teach children how to find their own materials from easily accessible and clearly labelled storage units, use them safely and return them after use. This limits how quickly children learn to care for their toys and equipment.

Overall, the provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are effective procedures in place to ensure that staff are suitable and the proprietor keeps clear records of the checks she undertakes. She identifies weaknesses in her provision and seeks advice and support in improving these. All the required policies and procedures are in place and stored appropriately although the majority do not relate specifically to this setting and some lack detail. This limits how well they support high quality care for the children. The proprietor deploys staff well so that children are well supervised in both play rooms and when using spaces shared with other users or in the public playground. However, the record of visitors is not consistently completed which compromises their safety. The proprietor does not always ensure play areas are arranged to offer children free movement and well spread-out activities.

The quality of the leadership and management of the nursery education is inadequate. The proprietor has not established effective planning and assessment procedures to ensure that children make good progress along the Stepping Stones. She has not ensured that staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage' and does not monitor the quality of the education offered. Consequently, children make insufficient progress.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

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 space, equipped with appropriate furniture, for children who wish to relax or play quietly without disturbance
- provide a broad range of developmentally appropriate activities to support children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual capabilities
- improve opportunities for children to learn about and develop respect for the cultural diversity of modern Britain
- ensure that children are cared for in groups of no more than 26 and that the available space is used effectively to meet their individual needs

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that all staff working with funded children have a thorough understanding of the Foundation Stage and are able to provide stimulating first-hand play experiences adapted to meet children's individual needs
- improve the opportunities for children to choose, plan, explore and experiment in all six areas of learning and to learn from their mistakes
- develop planning and assessment to identify what children are to do and

learn, what they achieve and what they will need to do next, in order to monitor their progress

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk