

Topsy Turvy Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 118584 |
| Inspection date | 14 June 2007 |
| Inspector | Angela Jackson |
| Setting Address | Brooks Hall, Harwood Avenue, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 2NY |
| Telephone number | 07752 143871 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Karen Mason and Emmie Kent |
| 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Topsy Turvy Pre-School opened in 1996. It operates from a scout hall in Ardleigh Green close to Hornchurch shops and local resources. The pre-school has sole use of the hall whilst in session. There is an enclosed outside play area adjacent to the hall.

The provider of daycare is the partnership of Karen Mason and Emmie Kent.

There are currently 80 children from two years six months to four years on roll. This includes 59 funded three and four year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school currently supports children with special educational needs. There are currently no children on roll with English as an additional language.

The Pre-school is open Monday to Friday 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:30 to 15:00 term time only.

There are nine members of staff in total working with the children, all of whom work part time. Over half the staff hold early years qualifications to NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) level 2 or 3. The pre-school receives support from the area Special Educational Needs

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and made to feel at home by the warm, friendly and caring staff who work with parents to make sure that early settling-in problems are minimised. The atmosphere is relaxed and calm. Children's health is promoted by the staff's regard to good hygiene practice such as cleaning down the kitchen work surfaces and tables before serving food or drink. The premises are cleaned daily. In addition to this, staff carry out checks, including the toilets, to ensure high standards of cleanliness are maintained. There is a good system in place for recording accidents and for dealing with sickness or emergencies. Most staff have a first aid qualification and many are trained in using epipens. Parents are always asked to sign the accident book and encouraged to share any concerns or worries with the staff. Staff ensure they are aware of individual children's needs such as food allergies and how to avoid any risk of incurring a reaction. Children are learning to take care of themselves as they independently go to the toilet and wash their hands afterwards, as part of their normal routine. They also wash their hands after messy activities and before snack time as they understand the need not to 'have germs'.

Snacks are varied over a three week rota and there is a choice of either a sugar free drink or water to go with them. Fresh drinking water is available at all times although children have to recognise when they are thirsty and let staff know. The children identify different fruits and use snack time to enjoy social interaction around the tables. They discuss their likes and dislikes but are not given the opportunity to serve themselves or see how portions are measured out and divided up.

Physical play such as hopping, skipping, jumping and using the slide is managed well inside the building and there is an outside grassy area for fine weather days. Children also play with balls and hoops to practise hand to eye coordination and develop muscle control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There is sufficient space to allow children to move freely between activities. Indoors they have room for a slide, large play mat and a quiet book corner as well as table activities and construction toys on the floor. Children have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and benefit from the way that staff regularly and sensitively discuss ways to avoid dangers. They enthusiastically participate in discussions and confidently contribute ideas such as 'no running' indoors when the tables are set out.

Staff are committed to safeguarding children and to promoting their welfare. They are vigilant and carry out daily checks on the premises and property including the outdoor area when it is to be used. The toys and resources are made from a variety of materials, both man made and natural, and conform to safety standards. They are checked regularly to ensure children come to no harm from broken or damaged equipment. Children are protected from strangers entering the hall and grounds and all visitors sign the visitor's book. The entrance doors are kept locked and, when the children are outside, gates to the grassed area closed. To promote children's

independence in the wider world, children learn about road and personal safety. Fire evacuation practice is carried out regularly.

The welfare of children is of paramount importance to all staff. The required procedures and documents are in place and there is a designated member of staff with special responsibility for safeguarding children. She attends regular training and keeps all staff updated in current practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy themselves and are happy in their play. They interact well with each other and with staff and benefit from the systems in place that enhance pastoral care such as each child having a key worker. Key workers help children settle in and are a point of contact with parents. As a result of the security and comfort this offers, children are self-reliant and are comfortable forming relationships with others. Children respect, and readily respond to, the needs of other children, sharing and turn-taking naturally and voluntarily. They are shown how to look after the resources available and help to tidy away after themselves. Children listen with interest and participate appropriately at circle time and during other small and large group activities. They encourage each other and learn by watching and taking part.

Children benefit from a sufficient range of planned activities appropriate to their age. However, there are some inconsistencies in evaluating the plans and progress made and in showing a clear picture of the next steps for children. The resources meet their needs and help develop a sound understanding of everyday situations. Children take part in role-play activities and use their imaginations to make up stories within the home corner and when playing with dolls and other toys. Staff lead singing games for children to practise movement such as hopping, skipping and jumping but these are not used to extend children's vocabulary. Access to music in other forms is limited.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff regularly attend training courses and are developing their skills and understanding of the Foundation Stage. Children are starting to benefit from this as recent observations are being linked to the stepping stones for learning. Children's individual strengths and weaknesses are taken into account although the plans do not show ideas for differentiation. Plans cover all six areas of learning but do not show links between the areas. Some activities provide children with valuable first hand practical experiences like weighing and measuring pasta. Children are socially aware and emotionally stable. This gives a secure base for improving and developing their skills and knowledge across other areas of the curriculum.

Assessment records are well organised but there is inconsistency in showing how observations and achievements are evaluated and used to underpin future work with individual children. This means that opportunities to extend children and to help consolidate learning such as simple calculation and using writing for a purpose within everyday situations are being missed. The children use a telephone as part of their role play. There is no telephone book or writing materials handy to take messages or to look up and write down numbers. Similarly, when decorating biscuits or cakes, children are provided with prepared icing rather than seeing a recipe and weighing and mixing the ingredients for themselves.

Books are easily accessible throughout the session and some children take quiet time out during free play time to sit and read. They have a good awareness of how to handle the books and dislike seeing books that have been torn or spoilt in any way. Children enjoy the storytelling times. The variety of topics covered in the books gives children the opportunity to see for themselves and to discuss, different ways of life and difference in others. There is also a good range of dolls and small people toys reflecting other cultures. Some children want to write their names on their work but this is often done for children by staff. The purpose of writing or making marks that represent symbols or words is not always explained or discussed with the children. They copy or trace around figures without it relating to any meaningful task.

Children particularly like the creative and imaginative play. There is a lot of sticking and pasting going on with a wide range of materials available such as 'junk' in the form of toilet roll tubes, cereal boxes, tissue paper, pieces of material and foil as well as self-sticking shapes like hearts. Easels are set up with paper and paint and children help to move their finished work to a safe drying area. Parents say that children love the sticking and making activities and at home time each child has a handful of items to take home. The children's work is valued and they respect the efforts of one another.

Children join in with counting how many children are present during the group registration. This task is extended by developing children's recognition of 'how many', such as 'how many staff are wearing blue tops?'. There is little spontaneous discussion of number during other activities such as when the children are hopping and jumping. Children do not consistently recognise or use correct mathematical language, for shapes or measurement.

Children are developing their knowledge and understanding of the world through planned activities including exploration of nature in the outside area. They discuss the weather and the day of the week and tell the time of the day by whether it is before or after lunch. Children recognise a laptop as being a computer and relate this to doing 'work' like their parents.

Physically, the children have a sufficient range of activities planned that gives them the opportunity to develop control and coordination of their muscles. More vigorous and boisterous play is limited to the times when they can go outside.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The individual needs of children with learning difficulties or physical disabilities are taken into account and staff work with other professionals to ensure children are fully included. There is a named SENCO and developmental objectives, with appropriate strategies to implement, are written into Individual Education Plans. The setting is inclusive and children benefit from the intention 'to challenge discrimination'. Currently, there are no children with English as an additional language but there is guidance available for staff. The children are predominantly white, reflecting the local community. Children have good opportunities to recognise similarities and differences and to celebrate cultural and religious events. They use a range of resources which show positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability. Children and staff play and work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect where everyone is valued. There is no stereo-typing of toys, activities or language. Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural needs are fostered.

There is a behaviour policy and information booklet that parents receive at registration. Staff reinforce good behaviour by using positive strategies. They praise the children and encourage

them with smiles and reassurance. Children are polite and well-mannered with minimal prompting necessary to say 'please' and 'thank you' appropriately.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Children benefit from parents having opportunities to meet regularly with their child's key worker or either of the managers. There is a notice board displaying some useful information for parents and letting them know of forthcoming topics or events. There is a complaints policy but it is not displayed prominently and contact details are not up to date. Within the information booklet given to all parents is a section that gives brief details about the early learning goals. Parents are given verbal reports in relation to the six areas of learning and receive a written report when the child leaves to start school. Parents are pleased that children are happy and look forward to going each day.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff know their roles and responsibilities and work well as a team. Children are cared for in an organised environment which offers appropriate activities and suitable experiences to meet their overall needs. Staff are welcoming and treat children as individuals. As a result children are relaxed and confident. There is a staff recruitment policy. The managers carry out the necessary checks on all staff and their suitability to work with children. This ensures the children's safety and well-being. Children are supported by staff who regularly update their knowledge and understanding of childcare issues and new legalisation. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children's learning is promoted through satisfactory leadership and management of nursery education.

Legally required documentation is in place although some policies need updating in line with current legislation. There is an informal appraisal, induction and review system in place that is used to support and develop staff's individual strengths and areas for improvement. Managers and staff are currently working with the support adviser from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership to develop new systems to improve their practice for observing, assessing and planning for children's progress. However, staff's role in the teaching of mathematical and literary skills is not clearly defined. The impact of this is that the funded children are not always encouraged sufficiently to extend their understanding in practical ways in these areas.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the managers were asked to consider how a more varied and nutritious snack could be provided to promote healthy eating. Children are now offered a selection of fresh fruits as well as a cereal food such as toast or a plain biscuit. The snacks are varied from week to week and are served with sugar free drinks or water. In addition, children may have drinking water at any time they are thirsty.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection it was recommended that the planning of activities and resources takes into account children's individual needs. The managers are developing a new system of recording observations of children in line with the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage. They are working with the support of an adviser. However, observations are not informing planning

sufficiently well to be fully effective in helping children to make progress based on individual skills or previous learning.

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.

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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):

- ensure that all parents have ready access to the regulator's contact number

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):

- continue to develop a system of using observation and assessment records to ensure all children make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals
- improve cross-curricular planning to increase children's experiences of using mathematical language and the written word in everyday situations

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