

Wheatcroft Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400457
Inspection date	26 June 2007
Inspector	Christine Tipple
Setting Address	St Michael's Church Hall, Filey Road, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO11 3AY
Telephone number	01723 363179
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Registered person	Wheatcroft Pre School Playgroup
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?

Wheatcroft Playgroup pre-school opened in 1969. It operates from St Michael's Church Hall, situated to the south of Scarborough. The children have use of the main hall and a small room. The group has a secure outside play area adjacent to the main hall. The group is a registered charity managed by a parent committee. The pre-school serves the local and surrounding communities.

There are currently 41 children on roll, aged from two years to under five years. This includes 36 children in receipt of nursery education funding. The group opens Monday to Friday 09.15 to 12.00, and Thursday from 13.00 to 15.45 term time only. Children attending the morning session on a Monday and Wednesday can attend the lunch club, which operates from 12.00 until 13.00.

There are four key staff and one relief staff member who work with the children. The key staff all have childcare qualifications at Level 3 and above. The Pre-school are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children manage their personal care effectively and are confident in the health and hygiene routines in place. They are informed about the importance of keeping their hands clean and where necessary are supported to access the facilities by the staff, but still maintain their ongoing independence. There are topics and activities that extend the children's knowledge and understanding about keeping healthy and safe, such as sun protection and physical exercise. Details are in place to inform parents about the care of children when ill, and to ensure cross-infection is minimised.

The children are provided with daily snacks. These consist of a variety of fruit, sandwiches and other healthy options. There are other opportunities for the children to taste different foods, such as the baking activities and through the various celebrations in the year. However, the snack time is not fully extended to enable the children more independence to self-select and serve themselves. Drinks are provided during snack; these are milk and the option of water, which continues to be provided throughout the session to ensure the children have regular fluids.

Physical activities are well resourced and there is good daily access for the children to be outside in the fresh air. There is a well balanced selection of equipment that promotes the children's physical skills very effectively. The children are confident in using smaller tools to cut and shape a variety of materials. They develop their hand-eye coordination through activities, such as threading, ball games and using the mouse on the computer. They manage to manoeuvre themselves around obstacles both inside and out. The children have regular opportunities to balance, climb, run and jump confidently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff provide the children and parents with a welcoming and happy atmosphere. The premises and facilities are maintained and clean. The good use of space enables the children to move around and access all areas freely and mostly independently. The children have access to a good range and selection of resources and equipment which promote children's learning and developmental needs very effectively.

The safety of the children is managed very well by the staff who are vigilant in their approach. There are risk assessments in place which are reviewed to ensure safety is monitored. The children have regular opportunities to practice safety, such as tidying up in the session, and to walk and not run in the hall. The children discuss keeping safe when crossing the road before any trips or walks to ensure they 'look and listen', and hold hands. The children use tools safely through staff support and relevant instruction, such as using a real hammer and nails. The children have hands on experience through the visits to the pre-school from the emergency services, which informs children about people who help us in different situations.

The safeguarding of children is managed effectively by the staff. There are up to date information and contact details in place. Information is shared with parents through the pre-school's safeguarding children policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children come into the pre-school happy and smiling ready to access the range of activities provided. The children are able to choose what they wish to be involved in. The staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework with the younger children, and incorporate this into their observations and planning. A key worker system is in place and this works well in providing a consistency for the children in building self-confidence and ensuring their needs are supported throughout their time at pre-school.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children have a positive attitude to their learning and this is demonstrated in their ongoing interest. The staff have a sound knowledge of the early learning goals and plan and observe the children to ensure they meet their individual learning needs effectively. The staff promote and encourage a child-led approach to the children's learning and this is still being developed. There is a good range and balance of resources and activities which engage the children and provide a positive learning environment. Children demonstrate good levels of concentration, such as in their creative designs and in small group work. Staff are sensitive to the children's needs and are experienced in their approach to ensure the children feel secure and valued.

The children's communication and language skills are well developed and supported by staff who listen and ask them questions that extend their experiences. There are ongoing opportunities for the children to express themselves and they are confident to speak at circle time to tell their news or sing. Books are enjoyed by the children for stories as well as a source of reference for their topic, such as with the mini-beasts. The range of additional props in the story sacks enables the children to fully participate and add their own interpretations. This is further enhanced with the wonderful range of the children's own stories about their mini-beast pictures, which were made into a large book. Mathematical language and numbers are used regularly with the children in all areas of their play. The children have calculated through charts and the interaction with staff promote the concepts in relation to weight and volume through the water and sand play. The children are confident in their counting and recognition of number, and in the use of 'more' or 'less' in their problem solving. The processes of pattern and matching are practised with the children, who manage this concept well. The good use of the 'maths bags' enhance the children's interest in numbers, such as the worm activity where the children match, sort and count enthusiastically.

The children have plenty of opportunities to explore the world around them through their garden and in the range of activities provided. They are able to have first hand experiences to look at changes in nature, such as the caterpillars which are being monitored to see them change into butterflies. Children visit their local community and visitors come into pre-school. There is good access to the computer and this offers the children a range of additional learning activities. The children have a selection of resources and materials which develop their creative skills and ideas very effectively. The children's creative works are displayed, which shows what they have achieved and that their contributions are valued. They enjoy role play and this enables them to act out their experiences through dressing up and setting up a space ship. Children thoroughly enjoy the daily music and movement sessions.

The staff in their key worker roles effectively observe and assess the children's progress. They know the children and their families very well. However, the observations are not always clearly

linked to the learning outcomes. Parents are able to access their children's files and discuss their ongoing attainment. The staff evaluate and plan for the next stage for each child and ensure they are challenged and supported relevant to their needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The staff promote equality of opportunities positively through all areas of the pre-school. Staff know the parents and children well and time is given to enable children to settle in and to meet their individual needs. Children have good access to a broad selection of resources which promote diversity. The range of celebrations that are supported with the children through the year positively promote the wider world. Staff work with the children and parents to ensure they are inclusive in their approach. The children have outings into their local community, such as to the library, shops and garden centre. Visitors are also welcomed into pre-school to talk with the children about themselves and what they do. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Behaviour is managed very well by the staff, who have high expectations of the children's behaviour. This is reflected in the children's confidence in the routines and through their understanding of what is expected. The staff provide positive role models for the children through their calm, respectful and consistent approach. They are sensitive to the children's needs and ensure that they praise them and promote their confidence by being interested in what they do. Manners and sharing are evident in all aspects of the pre-school and the children develop their skills to negotiate with each other.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff work closely with parents to promote a trusting, friendly and professional approach, which ensures children are settled and secure. Parents are welcomed into the pre-school on a daily basis and can be on the rota to help at the sessions. Information is displayed for parents in relation to the pre-school's policies and procedures, and what their children are doing in their activities and how they can support their child's learning. The pre-school operates a key worker system that provides a link for parents in relation to their children and how they are progressing. The pre-school provides open sessions throughout the year where parents are invited to talk with their child's key worker and discuss in more detail their children's assessment files and evidence of what they have achieved, and how this links to the Foundation Stage curriculum. The pre-school encourages parents to take a more active role by being on the management committee.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children's care and learning is enhanced by the efficient and effective management of the pre-school. Children's safety and welfare is well promoted by a committed staff who are motivated and interested in the children and their ongoing development. The recruitment and selection procedures are informed and cover all roles within the pre-school. This includes clear details of the induction process and all relevant checks for suitability. The range of records and documentation is monitored, to ensure that these remain relevant and up to date; this includes the pre-school's policies and procedures.

Leadership and management are good. Staff work efficiently and effectively as a team and are confident in the operation of the sessions. Their knowledge of the children and the provision in place is good and promotes a happy environment. The staff and the management committee

work together to provide a child-focused approach. This is supported with ongoing training for the staff, such as child protection, working with parents and role play activities. There is a regular system for staff appraisals which ensures their individual personal development is supported effectively. Regular staff meetings promote a shared approach to children's learning and in the development of the resources, activities and experiences for the children. The committee provides good support for the staff in ensuring funds are available and in the administrative roles and responsibilities. The staff and the committee provide an evaluation, which is a action plan on what is planned for the future and what has been achieved; this enables an overview of good practice and areas to be developed. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care report recommended that the pre-school update the staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues.

The pre-school staff have attended training to ensure they are familiar and up to date with the procedures in relation to safeguarding children's welfare and safety. This is also reflected in the pre-school's revised policy and procedures.

The last funded education report recommended that the pre-school plan more effectively for the more able children, and to ensure that children have access to information technology to support their learning.

The staff have clear plans and knowledge of their key children. They ensure that children's individual needs are recognised and the more able children have ongoing opportunities to extend their abilities through the activities and interaction with staff. The pre-school has a computer and printer in place which are accessed by the children on a daily basis. This provides the children with a range of good learning resources in all areas of the curriculum.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 can be seen 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):

- extend the opportunities for the children to be more independent at snack time

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 the links with the six areas of learning when observing individual children.

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