

Rush Common Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	133409
Inspection date	23 January 2008
Inspector	Sheila Collins
Setting Address	Appleford Drive, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 2AQ
Telephone number	01235 530756
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Registered person	The Trustees of Rush Common 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 satisfactory. 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?

Rush Common Pre-School opened in 1962. It operates from the church hall at All Saints Methodist Church in Abingdon, Oxfordshire. A maximum of 27 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open during term time only from 09.00 to 12.00, Monday to Friday, with sessions for the older children on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, 12.15 to 14.45. The children have access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area.

There are currently 52 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 40 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the surrounding area. The pre-school currently supports children with learning difficulties and children for whom English is an additional language.

The pre-school is run by a committee who employ seven members of staff. Of these staff, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a recognised qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing independence in their personal care skills. Staff allow the children independent access to the cloakroom area but are on hand to help if needed. Children know the importance of washing their hands after toileting, painting, messy play, coming in from the outside and before snack. However, after washing hands for snack for some children there is a delay, so they go back to playing with toys. Each child brings their own towel to pre-school which ensures that there is little risk of cross infection. Towels are kept in the children's bags, so wet towels are returned to the bag with dry clothes underneath.

Children have healthy snacks. Staff give the children their individual plates, on which are a variety of fruit, vegetables and breadsticks. Children can bring in their own drinks, although milk and water are provided. Staff pour the drinks for the children. Drinking water is available throughout the session but not at a height where children can help themselves. Children ask the staff to help them get a drink. Older children who arrive for the afternoon sessions with their lunches, do not wash their hands prior to eating. Children begin to eat before everyone has arrived, which does not make this a social occasion. Parents do not receive any written information about food for lunch boxes, as a result, although most children have healthy options, some children arrive with sugary buns.

The staff know the children's individual health needs. There is always a trained first aider on site, who is aware of the appropriate way to deal with any accidents, which further ensures the children's health. Staff know the appropriate way to record the administration of medication and accidents but not all records contain the full name of the staff member who completed the paperwork. Written parental permission is in place to seek medical treatment but this does not include advice.

The children are able to take part in exercise and have good opportunities for activities out of doors on a daily basis, which promotes their physical development. They enjoy physical activities, such as climbing, balancing and using trolleys to pull their friends around in and buggies in which they push the dolls.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The hall is undergoing gradual refurbishment but the staff endeavour to make it welcoming for the children. Some areas within the hall for which the staff are not responsible have a build up of dust. The staff divide the hall so that the children have different areas in which to play. There is a specific area for each activity, for example the home corner, book corner, floor play area, craft area and table top activities. Due to the constraints of the hall committee, there are no areas where staff can easily display the children's work at their height. The children use a good selection of resources and toys, which are appropriate for their age and stage of development. Staff prepare the room prior to the arrival of the children, and they choose from the resources laid out. Staff rotate these so children have different items to play with but children have few opportunities to select items for themselves. There are too many books in the book box, which makes it difficult for the children to get these out easily.

Staff minimise the risks of accidental injury to children through visual daily risk assessments and safety checks. There are good procedures in place to ensure children's safety during the session, with visitors challenged and in sight of staff at all times. Children move confidently around the hall and easily access the toilets and the outside area. They know the rules which are in place for their safety and remind each other of these. Children take part in evacuation drills each term but staff do not record these in a fire log.

Staff have a basic knowledge of child protection issues and procedures. The supervisors are clear on the routes of referral if they have concerns about a child, which keeps the children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the pre-school and separate from their parents happily. They are confident, forming good relationships with their peers and adults. Younger children who are not sure are well supported by the staff, who are sensitive to their needs. Children approach staff for help with ease and invite them to join in their play. Staff spend a lot of time chatting with the children, reading to them and extending their play. They plan a variety of activities and encourage the children to participate in the range available, but do not pressurise the children if they do not wish to join in. Children select the toys and resources they wish to use from those set out, but have few opportunities to self select other resources.

The children show interest in what they do, discussing with each other the small world toys when playing with the dinosaurs and using magnifying glasses and binoculars to see what is happening. They concentrate well, for example when building towers out of bricks on floor or enjoying spreading glue on junk to make models.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children have personal independence in self-care skills but few opportunities to take responsibility for their own work or to independently choose resources for themselves. They are becoming confident speakers and are learning to listen well to each other and adults. They enjoy listening to stories read to them in small groups by the staff and have excellent opportunities to listen to well told stories as a group. Both morning and afternoon, children had the story of 'Going on a Bear Hunt' which was read to them on both occasions by different staff. Staff take the time to explain to the younger children the meaning of words such as swishy, swashy and encourage the older children to join in and predict what is happening. Children can access books independently and select books to read to each other. The children have daily opportunities for mark making, both in and out of doors, using various mediums and enjoy playing offices in the home corner. However, the absence of labelling around the room and resources, such as letter lines, means that they have few examples to help them with letter formation. They are beginning to learn phonics and more able children can write their names. They see their own names in print when they collect their cards to hang on their coat pegs, but have limited opportunities otherwise.

Children are learning to use numbers in a range of activities and have a basic understanding of addition and subtraction. They have some opportunities to practise their counting skills, for example, when counting the children in the afternoon session. They are learning to use mathematical language appropriately, for example, when playing with shapes and bricks to make towers. They learn about size and shape through practical activities such as construction

when they look for blocks of the same size and in junk modelling when they look for circular boxes to make wheels for their car. The absence of numbering in the room means that the children have limited opportunities to see numbers in print, as number line too high and away from the main play area.

Children take part in a range of play activities, which enable them to learn through first hand experiences. They have opportunities to explore and investigate on their own, for example with the magnifying glasses examining the dinosaurs and using the binoculars to see who they could see outside of the window. They have opportunities to use information technology such as phones, tills and computer keyboards, in the 'office'. The children are beginning to understand about different weather as they discuss putting coats on to go outside. They have opportunities to learn about the wider community, such as fire personnel, post persons, chefs, refuse collectors, dentists and farmers through topics such as 'People who help us'.

The children move freely and confidently around the hall. They access the outside play area where they enjoy activities daily, for example balancing, climbing up onto the slide and using dexterity to negotiate the obstacle course. They take part in group games, such as 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' They push and pull their friends around in trucks and set up a bus using chairs to take them all on a trip. They have a good understanding of spatial awareness, walking around games and objects on the floor and finding their own space when sitting on the carpets. They use small equipment with good control, for example paint brushes, glue spreaders and crayons.

Most children know their basic colours. They have a variety of experiences in using different mediums for creativity, including junk modelling and painting. They are able to sing simple songs from memory and have good opportunities for imaginative play, dressing up and outside play. They use small world play creatively, involving their friends in their play.

The staff work well as a team and deploy themselves around the room to support the children, encouraging their play and joining in by invitation. They ask children appropriate open-ended questions, which extend the children's learning and understanding. Staff interact well with the children and support them, which contributes positively to their learning and development. They ensure that all the children are effectively occupied and busy throughout the session.

An effective curriculum in place which gives children a wide range of experiences, with children learning through play. Planning and children's records reflect the early learning goals. However, the planning does not differentiate for more and less able children. Staff have good knowledge of the individual needs of the children but the observations made on the children are not kept in a format which is easy to use to assess the next steps for children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn to say please and thank you, as staff encourage this, especially at snack time. Children learn about acceptable behaviour as some staff remind them of the rules, such as walking nicely and no pushing. Not all staff are consistent with their management of all the children's behaviour. However, most children behave well, share, take turns and cooperate with each other.

Children access a range of resources promoting positive images of the wider world, for example, books and small world play. However, they have few opportunities to learn about cultures other than their own. The staff know the children well and value them as individuals. They praise,

encourage and support their efforts and achievements, which builds on their self-esteem and self-confidence. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents have access to the policies and procedures for the pre-school. They receive comprehensive information about the pre-school and details of the six areas of the early learning goals for the Foundation Stage. They are uncertain about their involvement in their child's learning. They do not share their child's progress information or see their child's development records on a regular basis, although staff encourage them to do so.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. Staff make effective use of the available space within the hall and provide children with a range of play opportunities. However, children have limited opportunities to choose resources independently.

An effective system is in place for the recruiting and vetting of staff, which ensures that the children are cared for by suitable staff. In the register, children's times of arrival and when they leave are not recorded. The register is not completed until after the sessions have started, which means that there are times when there is no accurate record of children attending. Also, other documentation, for example the accident records, have only the first names of staff dealing with the accident recorded. Information about incidents which occur are not recorded in a confidential format. The certificate of registration is displayed, which ensures that parents are able to check the registration status and conditions.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff attend regular staff meetings. Staff know their roles and responsibilities in the pre-school. They are deployed well and undertake different duties on a rota basis and willingly undertake to go outside when ratios rise. The supervisors are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and demonstrate a positive attitude to drawing up an action plan and making improvements.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, one recommendation was made. This was to review all procedures and records relating to day care and to ensure they are kept confidential, are readily accessible on the premises and available for inspection at all times.

At the last education inspection, three recommendations were made. These were to increase children's understanding of the different ways in which writing can be used to communicate; to improve the process by which parents are kept informed of their children's progress and to increase the opportunities for enabling three year olds to label their own work and develop the formation of letters.

Since these inspections there have changes to the staffing. Some progress has been made with these recommendations. All documentation relating to day care is in place with the exception of a fire log, which is recommended from this inspection. Some documentation, for example staff information, is held off site by the Chair of the committee, as the hall is used by other users, but this was readily available on request.

Recommendations to increase children's understanding of the different ways in which writing can be used to communicate and to increase the opportunities for enabling three year olds to

label their own work and develop the formation of letters, have been partially met. All the children in receipt of early years funding follow the same curriculum with both three and four year olds having opportunities to practice their emergent writing in different mediums on a daily basis. They are encouraged to write their names on their work by staff. The staff have explored various ways to improve the process for keeping parents informed about their child's progress. The key workers discuss with parents daily but formal exchanges tried, such as 'parent's surgeries', have not been a success. The pre-school continue to explore ways of involving parents in their child's learning and development records and sharing the records on a regular basis.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- review the arrangements in place for snack and lunch time
- ensure that the procedures for evacuating the building are clearly displayed and that records of drills are recorded in a fire log
- ensure that all staff are consistent in their handling of children's behaviour
- ensure that the registration system shows the actual hours of children's attendance and is completed on arrival

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):

- increase the children's opportunities to be independent, to take responsibility for their own work and to select their own resources
- continue to evaluate the planning to ensure that these differentiate for more and less able children and that assessments made are kept in a format which easily identifies the next stage for each child's learning

- continue to explore ways of involving parents in their child's learning and development records and sharing the records on a regular basis.

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